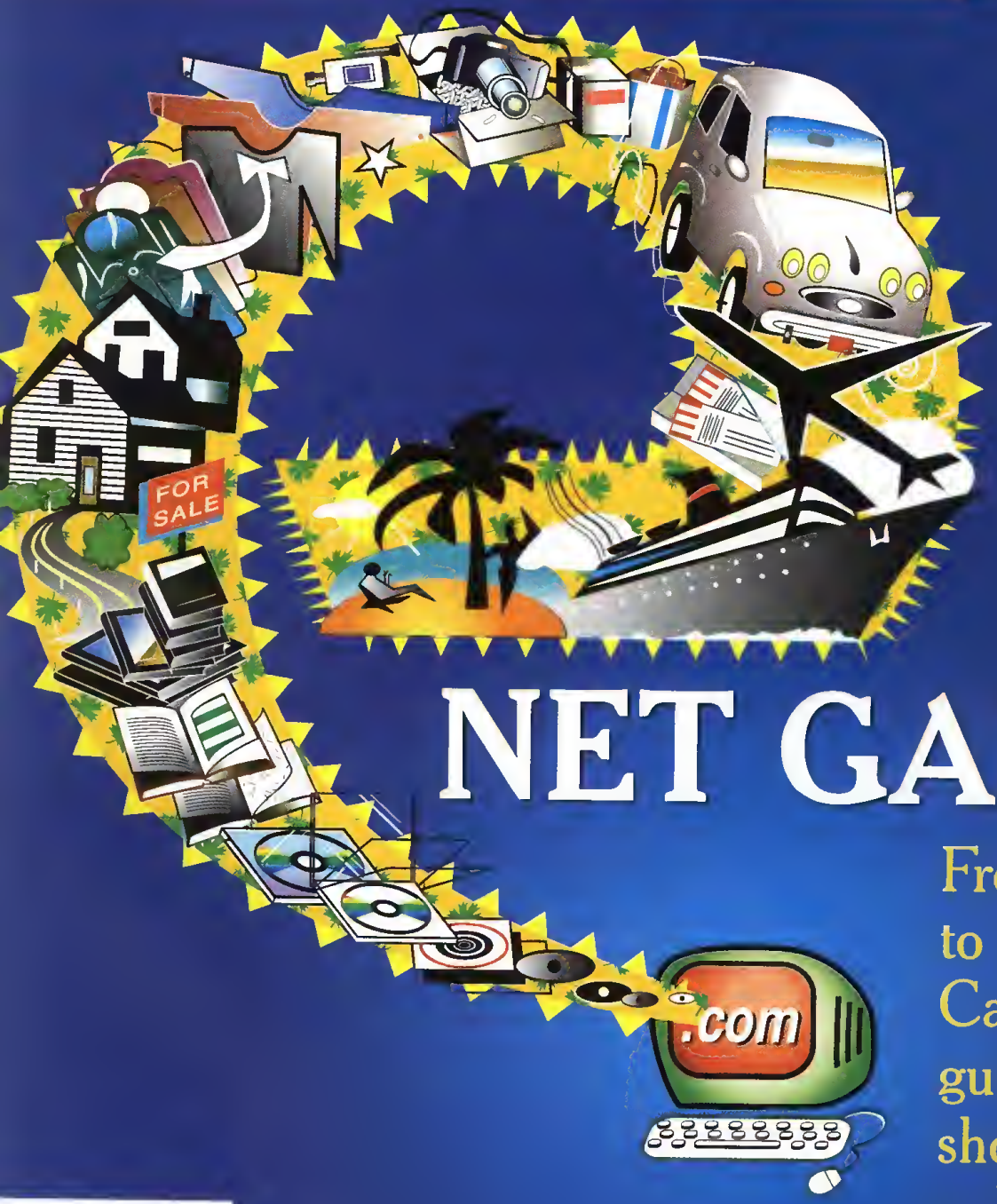
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Maclean's
July 12, 1999



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Maclean's
Canada's Weekly Newsmagazine
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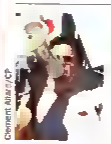


Photo — Bruce MacLean s

32 Net gains

Canadian shoppers are flocking to the Internet to order everything from automobiles to groceries But except for the likes of Sam (The Record Man) Sniderman and son Jason, retailers lag behind their American counterparts in responding to demand—and dollars are heading south.

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Quebec's striking nurses felt the hard stick of back-to-work legislation. Their fight, and the need to send some cancer patients to U S clinics, reflects a system under stress

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With 16 months still to go, Texas Gov George W Bush already looks like the man to beat in the 2000 presidential election



Reuters



Todd Korol for Maclean's

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The RCMP's re-enactment of a historic, 1,300-km trek across the Prairies by the original North West Mounted Police has been a tonic for a force mired in controversy

From the

Editor



A special memory of Pier 21

Tears well up in the woman's eyes as she recalls the saga of her father, a lawyer in Poland, who eventually landed in Canada four years in a concentration camp, his entire family and a two-year-old son killed at Treblinka, then the miracle of liberation, the birth of two children and a job in postwar Stuttgart, Germany, as legal counsel to displaced persons.

Finally, in May of 1950, the father, his wife and the two children land at Pier 21 in Halifax. After a ride on a soot-filled train to start life again in Toronto, the lawyer applies to the Law Society of Upper Canada, a folder brimming with praise for his work from allied legal and military colleagues in Stuttgart. The application is denied: non-citizens may not become lawyers and the family does not have five years to wait for citizenship. And so it was that Jacob Silberman became an insurance agent, a job he did cheerfully for the next 20 years.

Over lunch, Rosalie Silberman Abella tells the story of her father, without rancour, but barely able to conceal her pride that she not only became a lawyer, but now sits on the Court of Appeal for Ontario. She clutches the papers recommending Jacob Silberman to the law society, struggling to contain the emotion as she explains that the day she discovered her father was unable to become a lawyer in Canada was the day *she* decided to become a lawyer.

The struggle of Jacob and Fanny Silberman was one of thousands of stories told or remembered last week at the ceremonial reopening of historic Pier 21. They were among the 100,000 displaced persons and refugees who landed at Pier 21 after the war, along with 400,000 immigrants, including 48,000 war brides and 3,000 orphans. The restoration of the pier was the inspired handiwork of Nova Scotia volunteer extraordinaire Ruth Goldbloom. The official opening, and the memories that flooded back, were the emotional high point of Canada Day celebrations across the land.

They served both as a reminder of how Canada is a nation that has flourished because of immigrants, and of the darker moments when Jews and Chinese and Japanese were kept from our shores or penalized for being here. During the Depression, Canada slammed her doors on most immigrants, except those with money from Britain and the United States.

The Second World War changed that. In a moving feature article in the June 1, 1948, *Maclean's*, writer Eva-Lis Wuorio described meeting the SS Marine Falcon when it arrived in Halifax from Germany. "In the slowly moving throng," she wrote, "there was hardly a sound. Four hundred and thirty-one displaced persons, the doors closed to their northern European homelands, turned strained eyes this spring morning towards the still hidden shore of Canada." She went on: "Ten thousand DPs had come before them. Another 10,000 would follow to fill the quota Canada had decided to let in. Another million men and women and children, in the bleak camps of Europe, would wait for the nod they might never receive."

Rosalie Abella believes she was one of the fortunate ones. Coming to Canada, she says, was "the precious gift: the possibility of endless possibilities, and the freedom to pursue them in safety and security." She will always remember Pier 21. And so should every Canadian.

Robert Lewis

Newsroom Notes

Hello and goodbye



Caragata: moving

This week's cover package on the rapid growth of commerce on the Internet marks an end and beginning for Senior Writer Warren Caragata, who reported and wrote the entire 10-page package. Since joining the magazine as a senior writer in 1993, Caragata has spearheaded *Maclean's* technology coverage—with the exception of a two-year period spent with the then-fledgling New Media division of Rogers Communications Inc. (parent company of *Maclean's*). Now, he and his wife, Laurenne Garneau, are moving to Jakarta, Indonesia, where Garneau will oversee development projects with the Canadian International Development Agency. Caragata, who previously worked as a foreign correspondent in Moscow, will cover the region for the magazine from Indonesia.

The cover package was designed by Art Director Nick Burnett and overseen by Assistant Managing Editor Gwen Smith, working with Researcher-Reporter Patricia Treble.



The Mail

Canada's history

I read "Canada's century: 25 events that shaped the country" (Cover, July 1) while on an airplane over central British Columbia. As I read about our soldiers' great triumphs at Vimy Ridge and in Holland, I looked out the window and saw the mountains, lakes, farms and cities from where they came and for which they fought, and I nearly wept with pride. All the credit is due to Canada, of course, but thanks to historians Jack Granatstein and Norman Hillmer for reminding us of the great places we have been, and the great promise Canada holds for the future.

Darren Blois, Kamloops, B.C.

As a First Nations subscriber, I was quite upset over your so-called 25 events that shaped the country. Your historians forgot to mention that Canada did not allow the First Nations people to vote until 1960. They neglected to mention the Oka crisis, but thought it important to note the FLQ crisis. Your historians forgot to mention the residential schools that tried to kill a language and a culture during this century (until 1969). You mention the creation of the new territory of Nunavut; however, it seems you think it was a bad idea. I hope that, like South Africa, someday in the near future the First Nations will also reclaim their country.

Gil McGillivary, Edmonton



Canadians after Vimy Ridge triumphs

Your Canada Day package is brilliant—concise, informative and very readable. For someone who became a Canadian citizen 35 years ago and has grown to love this beautiful country and its lifestyle, I cherish the stories that shaped this young country. I hope that your package will become required reading for every schoolchild and new immigrant. As for me, this edition will be lovingly preserved in my history file.

Marlies Loukko, Delta, B.C.

Jack Granatstein and Norman Hillmer are right in selecting the 1917 Halifax explosion as one of 25 key events that shaped modern Canada. It brought war home to Canada and North America. However, *Maclean's* account reflects our limited knowledge of Canadian history. The French munitions ship Mont Blanc exploded after colliding not with a Belgian ship, but with a ship from Sandefjord, Norway. IMO, not Imo—the letters are initials—was chartered by an American relief organization to carry supplies for Belgium. En route to New York City, she stopped in Halifax because the British required all neutral North Atlantic traffic to undergo inspection.

There was no panic, justified or otherwise, on Mont Blanc. No crew member headed for the boats until Capt. Aimé Le Médec ordered his ship abandoned. No one tried to "scuttle" Mont Blanc. Boats from Niobe and Highflyer and the tug Stella Maris tried to take her in tow because she was on fire and drifting towards Picton. None of these sailors knew Mont Blanc might explode: her cargo was secret. They did know Picton carried ammunition and that worried them. Officially, the number who died is 1,963, not 1,600.

Joseph Scanlon, Director, Emergency Communications Research Unit, Carleton University, Ottawa

Several years ago, my wife and I and my brother who was a navy veteran made a special trip to visit the lovely cemetery where prime minister Lester Pearson is buried at Wakefield. It is not an easy cemetery to find, hidden in the hills and lanes that mark that beautiful part of Quebec. It was a spring day, and snow was melting and mud clung tenaciously to our rubbers. But the anticipation of visiting that site made any inconvenience tolerable. All of us, however, were saddened by the fluttering of a faded, tattered Canadian flag at the entrance to the cemetery. Here, where lies the body of the one who en-

About the victims

I was dismayed when reading your article "The massacre at the Ecole polytechnique" when I realized that you had not included any of the names of the 14 women who were murdered on Dec. 6, 1989 ("Canada's century: 25 events that shaped the country," Cover, July 1). Marc Lépine's name has been immortalized by media coverage, but I believe that there are very few Canadians who could name even one of the women whom he murdered. Geneviève Bergeron, Hélène Colgan, Nathalie Croteau, Barbara Daigneault, Anne-Marie Edward, Maud Haviernick, Barbara Maria Klueznick, Maryse Laganière, Maryse Leclair, Anne-Marie Lemay, Sonia Pelletier, Michèle Richard, Annie St-Arneault and Annie Turcotte.

Rachel Hurst, St. George, Ont.

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sured we have a flag. Surely one of the important tasks of those who are the keepers of our history is to ensure that the simple dignified gravesite of one of our illustrious prime ministers has at its gate a crisp Canadian flag to remind us of his significant achievements.

Bev Johnston, Burlington, Ont.

It isn't the cancellation of the Avro Arrow project in 1959 that upsets me. I understand that unpopular decisions sometimes have to be made by governments. What I cannot forgive then-Prime Minister John Diefenbaker for is his morally criminal act of ordering the destruction of all the existing aircraft, as well as the plans and documents. These items were part of our shared cultural history, and were precious objects that should have been preserved. I was 13 years old in 1959, and in love with airplanes. The Arrow set my imagination on fire, and as a symbol, made me believe that we in Canada could do anything. When those airplanes were so wantonly and thoughtlessly destroyed, we were all left with an impoverished view of our future, and a thick cynicism about the place of vision and imagination within our ambitions.

John A. Hawkins, Edmonton

The environment

David Suzuki's essay on the millennium ("Saving the Earth," June 14) should be required reading for all mankind. I was born in the small fishing community of Loon Straits on Lake Winnipeg, where there are no more fish and no more loons. The condition in which we leave our Earth to our children is an inheritance of far greater value than the condition in which we leave our bank accounts.

Marie Monkman Coe, Yellowknife

The Suzuki essay was wonderful. I'm not much of an environmentalist; I think "they" will take care of any problems that we, horribly resplendent in insatiable consumption, create for ourselves. Nor do I envision some sort of global meltdown some time in the beginning of the next century as some suggest; but I do appreciate Suzuki's simply eloquent argument that it is not "stuff" that is most important in life, rather it is familial and communal bonds that, I lament, are sorely lacking. We've created this greedy, egotistical world where the individual is vying for prestige at the price of another's loss. Our sense of belonging is diminished and undermined by our selfishness.

Vincent Rock, Burnaby, B.C.

David Suzuki writes a compelling essay on the need for halting the environmental impact of uncontrolled growth. He stops short, however, of tackling the real growth issue, which is overpopulation. Contrary to his basic argument, economic and social development help prevent the total annihilation of remaining pristine ecosystems. Imagine if there were no thermal, nuclear or hydroelectric power plants, and the world's billions were scattered freely to chop down trees for firewood and eat every living thing they could find. For proof of this one only needs to look at the paths of ecological devastation created where there is little economic development but high concentrations of people. Suzuki would do well, as would we all, to tackle the religious and social restraints that restrict birth control as an effective tool for preserving our world, for therein lies the real solution to the problem.

Craig Smith, Richmond B.C.

Political rewards

In the pantheon of ministers-counsellor for public affairs in the Canadian Embassy in Washington, there's one you omitted who also fits the mould—my father, George Elliott ("Let's hear it for the old pork barrel!" From the Editor, June 21). After advising Lester Pearson and Pierre Trudeau in several elections, he served from 1977 to 1982—right between Dick O'Hagan and Par Gossage—and referred to his time in Washington as "a lark."

Victoria Elliott, Washington

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Editorial Update

Maclean's columnists: Opinionated, provocative

Although the topics they cover are often miles apart, Maclean's award-winning columnists share a passionate interest in their subjects, and the experience and skills required to fully investigate and illuminate these issues.

When it comes to the rapidly changing worlds of business and technology, readers can rely on Maclean's Senior Business Correspondent Ross Laver to cut through the jargon and hyperbole that often surround the latest financial or high-tech fad, trend or personality. Maclean's business editor from 1995 to 1998, Laver draws on his experience and contacts to deliver relevant and dependable information about a myriad of business- and technology-related subjects.

In his regular reporting and biweekly column, he seeks to inform his audience and make sense of today's important business trends. "The Internet and globalization are two of the most powerful forces in the business world today," Laver says. "Together, they are forcing Canadian companies to rethink their operations from the ground up. Canadians — students, workers, senior managers and investors alike — will feel the changes in the world of business sooner than we think."

Most recently, Laver has been tracking the "North Americanization" of our country, which sees numerous Canadian companies seeking to forge alliances with strong American partners or set up operations south of the border.

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Opening

Notes

Edited by Tenya Davies



Tom Hanefak/CP



CBC



Tom Hanef ak, CP

Postwar troop ship arriving at Pier 21; war bride Florence Cooper (below); participants at the grand opening (left); young immigrants (bottom); festivity

A Pier from the past

The sky was gun-metal grey and the breeze off the harbour carried a salty tang. That much, at least, seemed familiar to the Second World War veterans, war brides, evacuees and long-ago refugees who made the pilgrimage to Halifax on Canada Day. They were there for a pomp- and glitter-filled festivity marking the grand opening of the refurbished Pier 21. With its state-of-the-art interactive centre and museum, the brick building is no longer the dank, dark and filthy place where 1.5 million immigrants touched ground in Canada between 1928 and 1971. "I remember it was awful," said Maria Rung, 77, of Saint John, N.B., a Dutch war bride whose ship, the Empire Brent, landed at Pier 21 on Dec. 14, 1946. "But we were just so happy to be on land and what we left behind was so much worse."



National Ar... PA153013

For some, the visit unleashed painful memories. Sasha Gartner—whose daughter, CBC TV journalist Hana Gartner, served as master of ceremonies at the opening—recalled walking down the gangplank in shocked despair. Hana was just two years old in 1951 when the family arrived after abandoning its prosperous textile factory in Prague. "You have to understand we once had this comfortable life and arrived with nothing," said Sasha Gartner.

Others have happier memories. Inside the centre—funded by corporate sponsors as well as $4 million from the federal government and $500,000 from the Halifax Regional Municipality—hangs a black-and-white photograph of smiling Latvia-born Ausma Levalds, age 8. Travelling with her mother to Kitchener, Ont., to join her father and brother, she became the 50,000th war refugee to pass through Pier 21 when their ship, the Samaria, arrived from England in February, 1949. On Canada Day, the retired teacher's voice choked as she tried to explain what it meant to be back in a place so pregnant with memory. "It is overwhelming," she said. "I don't have words." None were necessary.

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Susan Coleman

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Double Take

Todd Brooker





Brooker now; and in 1983: skiing star

As the last of the Crazy Canucks, Todd Brooker dominated World Cup skiing in 1982-1983, eclipsing his famous teammates Ken Read and Steve Podborski and beating the best Europe had to offer. Brooker was only 23, but he already had nearly 20 years experience on the slopes. His father, Charlie, a former Canadian Olympic hockey player, started taking him skiing when he was only three years old. "By 9 or 10, I was bored," recalls Brooker, who grew up in Waterloo, Ont. "I asked my dad, 'What else can I do?' And he said, 'Race.'" He eventually became king of the hill—in that championship season he was ranked No. 1 in the world—but from there to the bottom of the heap took just five years. "I fell a lot," is how Brooker, now 39, and a Wendy's fast-food restaurant franchise owner in Collingwood, Ont., describes his run of bad luck.

In fact, he fell so often and so hard that he amassed three concussions and damaged every major ligament in his left knee, resulting in three surgeries. Brooker also suffers from arthritis, a disease his mother and brother are afflicted with. In order to play golf or ski with his wife, Lisa, a homemaker, and their three young daughters, Brooker needs painkillers. That experience, and seeing aging athletes such as Bobby Hull and Johnny Bower deal with the debilitating disease, spurred Brooker to become a spokesman for the Canadian Arthritis Society. "I meet guys at celebrity golf tournaments," says Brooker. "And after they sit in the clubhouse for a round of beers, they can't get up without groaning."

Despite his ski injuries, Brooker has fond memories of his time as a Crazy Canuck. "Compared to the Austrians and Swiss, we were very rough around the edges," he says. "And there wasn't much money to be made then—but we were stars."

Barbara Righton

She got game



Stevenson: surprises on and off court

Alexandra Stevenson sure knows how to make a splashy debut. The 18-year-old Wimbledon rookie from San Diego threatened to sue the governing body of professional tennis when it claimed she was ineligible for prize money at Wimbledon because she failed to properly notify them of her change in status from amateur to pro. (Tour officials later recanted.) Then, her mother, freelance journalist Samantha Stevenson, told reporters her daughter—who is of mixed race—had been subjected to racial slurs and lesbian advances from other players. Finally, on the day Alexandra won a quarter-final berth in the championship, a Florida newspaper reported that her birth certificate listed her father as Julius Erving, basketball's legendary Dr. J, who played for the Philadelphia 76ers in 1980 when Stevenson's mother worked in the same city. Erving, married since 1972 and the father of four, initially denied she was his daughter, but at week's end admitted that the tennis phenom is his child. On Saturday, his daughter's on-court success at Wimbledon came to an end when she lost in the semifinals. If nothing else, Stevenson's off-court notoriety has been a slam dunk.

Pop Movies

1	Big Daddy (185/1)	$4 857 330
2	Austin Powers 2 (225/3)	$3 326 530
3	Star Wars: Ep. 1-Phantom Menace (255/7)	$2 936 070
4	Tarzan (183/2)	$2 809 380
5	The General's Daughter (178/2)	$2 112 120
6	Notting Hill (178/5)	$1 158 010
7	Wild Wild West (193/1)	$1 069 530
8	South Park (125/1)	$755 730
9	Instinct (111/4)	$240,030
10	The Mummy (73/8)	$173,400

Top movies in Canada, ranked according to box office receipts during the seven days that ended on July 1 (In brackets: numbers of screens/weeks showing.)

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Film thrills



In the latest offering from IMAX, Extreme, the exhilaration of sports is taken to the max. The footage of skiing and snowboarding in the wilds of Alaska, ice-climbing in British Columbia, and surfing and windsurfing in Hawaii is adrenaline-fuelled. But in this action-packed film, the athleticism is dwarfed by the breathtaking landscapes

Passages

Died: Father of Zimbabwe's struggle for independence, **Joshua Nkomo**, 82; of prostate cancer, in Harare. A union leader, Nkomo was elected president of the Southern Rhodesian African National Congress in 1952, and fought his country's white rulers for the next three decades. Zimbabwe achieved black majority rule in 1980, but Nkomo was ousted as president by the current leader, **Robert Mugabe**. In 1987, Nkomo was appointed vice-president, a position he held until his death.



Nkomo

Died: Former Col. **George Papadopoulos**, 80, who ruled Greece during the 1967-1974 dictatorship, of cancer, in an Athens hospital. Papadopoulos was sentenced to death for high treason after democracy was restored in 1975, a sentence later reduced to life imprisonment.

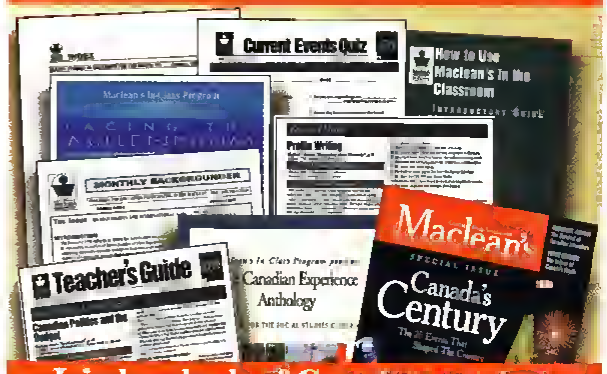
Died: Film director and one of the Hollywood 10, who served prison time during the Red Scare witch-hunts of the 1940s-1950s, **Edward Dmytryk**, 90, of heart and kidney failure, in Encino, Calif. Dmytryk was blacklisted until he named fellow Communist party members.

Died: Viscount **William Whitelaw**, 81, a key aid and political fixer for former British Conservative prime minister Margaret Thatcher.

Died: Author **Mario Puzo**, 78, creator of the fictional Corleone mob family and winner of two Oscars for screen adaptations of his 1969 novel, *The Godfather*, of heart failure, at his Long Island, N.Y., home.

Sentenced: Serial killer **Charles Ng**, 38, to death, in Santa Ana, Calif. Ng was convicted in February of killing 11 people between 1984 and 1985, when he fled to Canada. Arrested in Calgary, Ng fought extradition for five years, but was finally returned to California in 1991.

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Opening Notes

Best-Sellers

Fiction	POSITION LAST WEEK
1. HANNIBAL, Thomas Harris (4)	1
2. DEATH DU JOUR, Kathy Reichs (5)	2
3. WHITE OLEANDER, Janet Fitch (8)	3
4. THE GROUND BENEATH HER FEET, Salman Rushdie (11)	5
5. AN EQUAL MUSIC, Vikram Seth (10)	8
6. MOTHER OF PEARL, Melinda Haynes (2)	6
7. THE GIRL WHO LOVED TOM GORDON, Stephen King (11)	10
8. A GOD IN RUINS, Leon Uris (5)	9
9. TIMBUKTU, Paul Auster (1)	
10. STAR WARS: EPISODE I—THE PHANTOM MENACE, Terry Brooks (8)	4

Nonfiction	
1. ENCORE PROVENCE, Peter Mayle (6)	1
2. THE TRUE INTREPID, Bill J. Macdonald (2)	5
3. SHADOW, Bob Woodward (1)	
4. ELEGY FOR IRIS, John Bayley (1)	
5. THE FIRST WORLD WAR, John Keegan (4)	2
6. BELLA TUSCANY, Frances Mayes (12)	4
7. THE PROFESSOR AND THE MADMAN, Simon Winchester (33)	3
8. BRUCE CHATWIN, Nicholas Shakespeare (4)	6
9. WOMAN: AN INTIMATE GEOGRAPHY, Natalie Angier (2)	7
10. A POSITIVELY FINAL APPEARANCE, Alec Guinness (5)	8

() Weeks on list

Compiled by Brian Bethune

A literary city

In the past two centuries just about every English-language Canadian writer—and numerous eminent foreigners—has spent some time in Toronto. And Greg Gatenby, artistic director of the city's International Festival of Authors, has attempted to record them all in *Toronto: A Literary Guide* (McArthur & Company). Arranging his book as a series of walks past sites associated with more than 500 writers, Gatenby offers brief sketches or anecdotes about each. They range from the obscure to such icons as angry P.E.I. poet Milton Acorn and American crime writer Elmore Leonard, who opened his 1989 thriller, *Killshot*, in the seedy downtown hotel that was Acorn's home from 1970 to 1977.



Backstage



Anthony Wilson-Smith

Of gossip and guessing

For those who wonder, here is the definitive word on Jean Chrétien's future, brought to you by the Ottawa press gallery. He plans to resign as prime minister. Or maybe not. If he does quit, he will wait until the fall of 2000 to do so. Or he'll run in another election, and then quit. Or stay in the job till he is too feeble to address even a golf ball. But before the Prime Minister decides, he will shuffle his cabinet. Or not. That decision might come soon, or later. It could involve ministers you have actually heard of, or not. In the meantime, the gallery insists, the Liberals are discussing the idea of a shared currency with the United States. Or not—since senior cabinet members, starting with the Prime Minister, deny such plans.

Now you know as much—or little—about those subjects as any member of the press gallery, even though they've spent most of their time recently thinking, talking and writing about little else. Along with death, taxes, and pontificating about the need for tax cuts, the staples of Ottawa life—such as it is—involve gossip about what's going on in cabinet, and guessing the shelf life of political leaders. It's sort of a wonk's version of the old hockey Hot Stove League, where the guys got together and second-guessed coaching strategy over beers. It happens in Ottawa without fail every summer, during the slow, silly season. What's interesting about it—if anything—is what it says about the way that politicians and journalists interact, and feed off each other.

Anyone who says they know the Prime Minister's plans for the future is fibbing. Pierre Trudeau and Brian Mulroney both conducted business-as-usual up to the day they announced departure plans. This prime minister will do the same. Governing involves preparing for the future: a prime minister who acknowledges not having one has no relevance, or real power. And it's possible that not even Chrétien knows what he plans to do a year or two from now: he is 65, an age at which people reflect on an ongoing basis about such concerns as health, amount of time spent with grandchildren, and the wishes of their spouse. If he does know, the people outside his family who are likely privy to his thoughts—such as chief of staff Jean Pelletier, senior adviser Eddie Goldenberg, and Montreal businessman John Rae, his longtime friend—won't tell. As a general rule in such matters, those who know, don't talk, and those who talk, don't know.

The same is true of cabinet shuffles. In 1993, when he appointed his first cabinet, Chrétien didn't decide who would fill four portfolios until the night before the swearing-in ceremony. That didn't stop many journalists and putative ministers from speaking knowledgeably of the cabinet's composition for weeks before that.

Both subjects are classic examples of political nonstories: they involve speculation about something that can't be confirmed because it has not happened, and may never take place. That doesn't stop either from being a popular topic because in Ottawa, just as on the stock market, even supposed knowledge is power—especially when it has an inside feel. Journalists like speculating about the politicians they cover because, among other things, it shows they're in the loop, makes them part of the story, and allows them to reward some people and punish others in their coverage. It's been said that if you want to identify a journalist's best source, look to see who he or she brings as a "date" to the press gallery dinner every year. Similarly, watch how some journalists promote little-known or dark-horse candidates for prominent cabinet positions, or as the next prime minister. By most measures, Newfoundland Premier Brian Tobin is a distinct longshot to succeed Chrétien. He speaks only halting French, and a premier's chair, especially in a small, impoverished province, is historically one of the worst launching pads for the prime minister's position. But Tobin became a great friend of some reporters in his Ottawa days, and that's reflected in the upbeat descriptions of him these days as a bona fide contender in an eventual race.

Then, there's the fundamental disconnect between life amid Ottawa's political culture, and real life elsewhere. A veteran political organizer who spent many years in Ottawa before moving to Toronto observes that he was shocked by one immediate difference in Ottawa: everything revolves around politics, while elsewhere, nothing does. In a place where your social circle routinely includes civil servants, political aides, people who rely on government contracts, and a journalist or two, the shuffling of a deputy minister, and the dislocation that causes through the ranks, is like a volcano's tremor.

But the impact of that stops around Ottawa's city limits. Today, governments win praise for doing less, not more. Chrétien, a master of minimalism, understands that, which puts him more in synch with the public than most journalists covering him: they resent the fact his inaction breeds fewer stories. There's a legitimate argument that Parliament, the place where all Canadians are represented, deserves close scrutiny, even if most people ignore it. But when reporters obsess about non-events like the Prime Minister's future and the fate of cabinet sources, the notion of "national interest" is replaced by its polar opposite: self-indulgence. Beyond Ottawa's constricting confines, plenty of disaffected readers and viewers would be happy to explain the difference.

Health Care on the Line

By Brenda Branswell

Under a hazy sky, Helen Beath clutched a placard on the picket line outside Montreal General Hospital. Even though she retired in May after 43 years of nursing, Beath returned to the hospital last week to support her former colleagues. After launching an illegal strike on June 26, the province's 47,500 nurses spent the week locked in a standoff with the Quebec government over pay and deteriorating working conditions. "The frustration level is at an all-time high," said Beath. Nearby, Nathalie Comtois scrawled slogans on placards while passing cars, buses and trucks blared their horns in an encouraging, almost nonstop show of support. "We are all exhausted, we're on the edge of burnout," said Comtois, a union representative and nurse in the General's neurological intensive care unit. "You have a patient who gets bad news and the only thing you have time to do is say, 'Well, I'm very sorry, sir—but I have to go.'"

Nurses in other parts of the country share their Quebec colleagues' militancy. Alberta and Newfoundland came to the brink of serious work stoppages. In April, Saskatchewan nurses defied back-to-work legislation and went on a 10-day illegal strike leading to a long standoff with the province that was only tentatively settled on Friday, the same day Premier Lucien Bouchard was legislating his nurses back to their posts. Bouchard gave the striking nurses until Saturday afternoon to return to work. But the mood on the picket line was defiant and Quebec's back-to-work law, while imposing fines and restrictions on union leaders, pulled its punches: the bill contained no measure to strip nurses of seniority or send leaders to jail.

The dispute with the nurses is just one of several problems—some more recent, others longstanding—gnawing at Quebec's beleaguered health-care system. In mid-June, partly due to a shortage of specialists, especially radio-oncologists, the province began sending cancer patients to the United States for radiation treatment after waiting lists became too bloated. (Ontario and British Columbia have also been forced to send patients south of the border). Then, on Thursday, ambulance technicians, seeking premiums for weekend work, voted overwhelmingly in favour of a general strike for later in the month. And nearly 1,000 hospital pharmacists renewed an earlier threat to resign en masse in September over stalled contract talks. Hoping to nip that revolt in the bud, the government has included them in a new bill governing essential services.

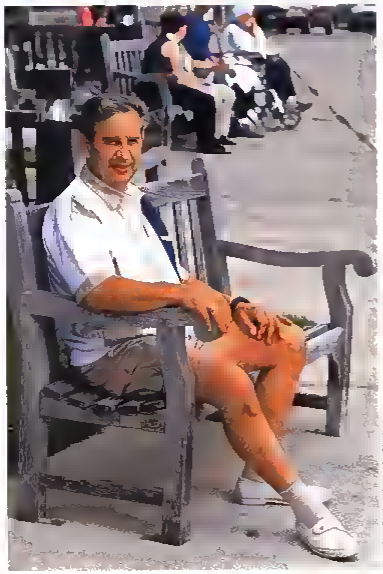
The disputes follow years of belt-tightening. The Parti Québécois government slashed more than $1.4 billion from the health-care system during its first mandate and, though pledging to reinvest similar amounts, has imposed strict limits on public sector salaries. The result: "You've got all of the provider groups fed up," observes Lee Soderstrom, a health economist at McGill University. "They see their workloads have increased substantially. And at the same time, they see their incomes have, at best, remained constant in real terms."

For nurses, their union's rallying cry "enough is enough" captured the mood of many on the picket line. In 1996, when the government offered early retirement packages to public workers as part of its deficit-slashing efforts, 3,200 nurses took the buyout—and those who remained have since complained they are being run off their feet. According to Michèle Boisclair, vice-president of the Quebec Federation of

Defiant nurses and cancer patients shipped to U.S. clinics reflect a system under stress



Nurses in front of Quebec national assembly just days before the back-to-work order, a popular cause but an illegal strike



Pierre-Paul Poulin/Magma for Maclean's

Montrealer Brin in Plattsburgh, N.Y., for radiation treatment: avoiding the long wait

The problems with health care may come at a political cost for the Bouchard government

Nurses, the union's membership hasn't had a decent pay increase in five years. In fact, nurses have had only a one-half-per-cent increase in 10 years. "We have been holding the health-care system on our shoulders," declared Boisclair. "Families and patients know that."

Among the lowest paid in Canada—the most senior nurses earn $44,000—Quebec nurses were demanding a six-per-cent raise over two years, plus an immediate 10 per cent as catch-up pay. But Bouchard refused to budge on the government's uniform offer to all public servants: a five-per-cent raise over three years and an offer to consider some sort of catch-up if an independent commission agrees it is necessary. By week's end, his government claimed that 11,500 operations had been cancelled as a result of the dispute. But a strong current of public sympathy clearly backed the nurses. Just before they walked off the job, one poll showed 71.3 per cent of Quebecers thought their salary demands were reasonable.

Nicole Laverdière experienced firsthand some of the problems afflicting Quebec's health-care system. In mid-March, following a routine mammogram, an abnormal mass in her breast was determined to be malignant. But the 52-year-old clerk from Pintendre, near Quebec City, did not begin radiation treatment at a Montreal hospital until late June, after being bounced around from one possible treatment site to another. "It's frustrating," the soft-spoken Laverdière told *Maclean's*. "I think it's playing with people's lives."

Laverdière is not alone. In his cramped hotel room overlooking a bustling road in Plattsburgh, N.Y., Hervé Brin, 60, was relaxing hours after his first treatment for prostate cancer. Like many Quebecers, Brin used to equate this small upstate city, 100 km from Montreal, with cross-border shopping. But now, he and a dozen other cancer patients are being treated at Plattsburgh's FitzPatrick Cancer Center, a gleaming institution with carpeted floors and pale pink walls.

While some Quebec patients refused the Plattsburgh option, Brin pushed to get on the list—even though he speaks little English. Staying in Montreal would have meant waiting until the fall for an appointment. A retired foreman, Brin is relieved to be treated—but his assessment of Quebec's health-care system is not glowing. "I'm not a grand strategist," says Brin, "but I don't understand how it deteriorated like that."

In late May, Quebec announced its intention to send patients to the United States. The reason: of the 1,200 patients in the province needing radiation therapy, nearly 300 had been waiting more than eight weeks for treatment, some as long as 19 weeks. "It's never been this bad," says Dr. Carolyn Freeman, chief of radiation-oncology at Montreal's McGill University Health Centre and the head of a government advisory committee on cancer treatment. "It is a crisis now."

Freeman is encouraged by the recent response from Quebec's health minister, Pauline Marois. Among the new measures announced to deal with the problem are a special cancer task force and plans to recruit more oncologists and buy new radiation machines. But many critics contend the predicament was a foreseeable one. Quebec oncologists warned the government in the 1980s about a shortage of doctors. Still, the province established a limit on the number of openings for cancer specialists. "It's definitively a flagrant lack of planning," argues Dr. Michel Gélinas, vice-president of Quebec's Association of Radio-oncologists.

The problems in the health-care system may also come at a political cost for the Bouchard government. The militancy among the nurses and other health-care workers may presage even larger troubles to come when negotiations with the rest of Quebec's 400,000 public sector workers kick into high gear this fall. Bouchard has pledged to create "winning conditions" for a sovereignty referendum—which some observers say may be held next year. But widespread labour unrest may deal the PQ's aspirations a blow. "It's rare that a government emerges stronger from those kinds of confrontations," says Louis Massicotte, a professor of political science at the Université de Montréal. For the Bouchard government, last week's standoff with the nurses may be just the first of many headaches. ■

Death at a burger joint

On a soft summer night, a family's dreams are shattered by a shotgun blast

In the early morning of June 28, the blacktop of a suburban Toronto plaza echoed with the screech of car tires, competing stereos and the chattering end-of-school voices of the city's youth. At 3 a.m., the all-night Burger King is a popular hangout: it's a place to be seen, to lean against a car and let the night air cool overheated bodies from overcrowded dance floors. For Sandy Ebrahim, three days shy of her 17th birthday, this ritual of adolescence was new. The Mississauga teen, who sang in the church choir and was a dutiful daughter of strict Coptic orthodox parents, had never been out this late, never been to this plaza on the other side of Toronto and, for that matter, didn't get into the dance club she and her four friends had gone to when they were supposed to be at a sleepover.

A modest adventure. But it went disastrously wrong when two men pulled up in a stolen black Lincoln Navigator and the passenger, his face partially covered, fired two shotgun blasts at the silver Audi that Sandy was leaning against. The other girls escaped injury, but Sandy, shot in the back, was pronounced dead on arrival at Markham Stouffville Hospital. Police, still searching for a motive at week's end, believed Ebrahim, who was to leave last week with her mother and seven-year-old brother for a summer in Egypt visiting family, was not the intended victim. "It would appear they were targeting someone," said York Regional Police Det. Sgt. Denis Mulholland. "Either that or we have a random drive-by shooting of an innocent victim, which certainly would scare every parent around."

Sandy Ebrahim was a clean-cut, popular teenager, and more than a hundred schoolmates attended her funeral at the Coptic church of Virgin Mary and St. Athanasius, awkwardly and spontaneously forming a procession to leave flowers at the altar. Sandy's father, Magdy Ebrahim, made a televised plea for the killer to come forward. "If that guy phones me and says, 'I'm sorry, I didn't mean to shoot your daughter,' I'll forgive him," said Ebrahim, an entrepreneur and part owner of a carpet store. But if his daughter's killer thinks he can escape arrest, he had this warning: "God is watching you. He's going to come after you."



Mark Mackie/Toronto Star



Toronto Star

Ebrahim, Coptic pallbearers (top): a dutiful daughter, three days shy of 17

So are the police, though progress has been slow. The Navigator sport utility vehicle was stolen at 1:30 a.m. about three kilometres from the non-alcoholic nightclub for which Ebrahim and her friends had tickets, and found abandoned 30 minutes after the incident. The all-ages club was oversold, sending the five girls on an odyssey to a Scarborough coffee shop and then for some fast food to a shopping plaza just inside Markham. There were more than 100 young people in the plaza. Most fled when the shotgun was fired—perhaps even, police said, the intended victim.

The shooting capped a series of tragic incidents involving Canadian teenagers. On June 27, five Ottawa-area teens lost their lives in a fiery early-morning car accident when their four-car convoy, containing 14 boys, collided with a pickup truck and trailer near Perth; a week before, a 16-year-old Beaverlodge, Alta., student was killed during a 4 a.m. joyride on the property of environmental activist Wiebo Ludwig. The Mounties in Grande Prairie have completed their search of Ludwig's property, but have laid no charges.

In the Ebrahim case, Sandy's best friend, whose family asked that her name not be used, told *Maclean's* that she can't steel herself to talk about what happened that night. "I just have every emotion going through me," the 16-year-old said. "Nothing in the world feels safe anymore."

John Nicol *with Susan Oh*

Dancing with the elephant next door

The cabinet takes up the American challenge

Perhaps all that was needed to give a boost to the sorry fortunes of the Canadian dollar was to speculate that the time had come to dump it. A week after talk of a currency union with the United States seeped out of academia and onto Ottawa's summer barbecue circuit, the loonie actually found itself up almost two-thirds of a cent against the American dollar. The chatter about the loonie's eventual death certainly tantalized those Canadians who look longingly south, wondering how to keep up with the continental Joneses. Only Jean Chrétien was having none of it. "This is not on the agenda," said the Prime Minister as he gavelled open a two-day, closed-door cabinet retreat in Ottawa. Chrétien was so wary of having ministers batting the idea of currency union around *his* cabinet table, he repeated the warning at the end of the session.

Not on the agenda, but always on the mind. No Canadian cabinet can afford to blissfully plunk its head in the sand when it comes to things American. Even last week's tiny surge in the loonie was essentially a case of piggybacking on unexpectedly good American economic news. "Eighty-five per cent of our trade takes place with them," Chrétien told reporters after the meeting. "What would be surprising is if we were not interested in our relationship with the United States." In fact, Ottawa has become jittery about the across-the-fence friendship in recent months. Strains are popping up, from threatened trade wars to American restrictions on hi-tech trade because of Washington's allegation that Canada is lax with sensitive information.



Peter Bregg, Maclean's

Chrétien at 24 Sussex: no to a common currency

But if Chrétien's intention at the cabinet retreat was to discover ways to *improve* bilateral trading relations, advisers say he heard more from those increasingly unsettled ministers on the Liberal left who are anxious about any further American infringement on Canadian sovereignty. The recent deal with Washington to allow greater American access to the magazine market was a bruising experience for the Liberals. Some ministers and a restless caucus saw the final deal as a thinly veiled surrender of domestic cultural policy. For them, the issue is whether Ottawa has the willingness to use the protections still afforded it under its trade agreements. Do you use those rights, asks the Liberal left? Or do you fold your tent the first time the Americans bark?

For the official Opposition, any sign of a reinvigorated Liberal left is all too predictable. "Scratch a Liberal and you find the free trader on the outside is still a protectionist inside," says Reform MP Jason Kenney. "The Liberals have been mugged by reality, and I'm sure some regret and resent that."

But those realities are not about to abate. One pressing one: find a solution to the threatened decamping of Canada's small-market hockey franchises to U.S. cities, where teams are seduced by sweeter tax treatment—and revenues in American dollars. The Liberals are clearly anxious to avoid having any more Canadian teams pull up stakes on their watch. But are they comfortable providing tax breaks or large subsidies to an industry populated by highly visible young millionaires? Last week saw them offering to pony up $15 million a year for Canada's six teams if the provinces, players and league contributed similar amounts.

So the issue of how to retain sovereignty in a world rushing to tear down barriers remains at the heart of how to govern, the meridian around which all Chrétien ministers are positioned. "We've been together a long time now and pretty well know where we all stand," Fisheries Minister David Anderson said with a laugh after last week's meeting. The solution to dealing with the Americans, he said, does not lie in sticking to either ideology of protectionism or globalization. "We're up against so enormous a presence that I liken it to being Greeks in the Roman empire," he says. "You've got to be smarter, you've got to be quicker, you've got to be a little better educated." Canadians will watch, then, to see just how nimble the Liberals can be.

Bruce Wallace *in Ottawa*

Prosecution aborted

Relatives of the 26 miners killed in the Westray mine explosion seven years ago saw their hopes for justice go up in smoke. An independent report said that Nova Scotia prosecutors acted properly in staying manslaughter and criminal negligence charges against mine managers Gerald Phillips and Roger Parry a year ago. The two were charged within months of the 1992 disaster.

Chased from town

Quebec's language police are vowing to return to the rebellious anglophone town of Shawville, northwest of Ottawa, where one of their inspectors was shooed away last month by a convoy of local businesspeople. Inspector Lucie Couvrette was taking pictures of the English signs in the town of 1,500 when the local media began taking pictures of her and townspeople followed her about until she left.

Reform's leaky ship

A leaked Reform party memo asserting that many MPs should be discouraged from running in the next election elicited an angry response from some who felt they were singled out for bucking the party line. Chief party strategist Rick Anderson's memo surfaced as leader Preston Manning was launching a campaign to have $26 billion cut from federal taxes. It also was revealed the party is $472,000 in debt.

Faint hope

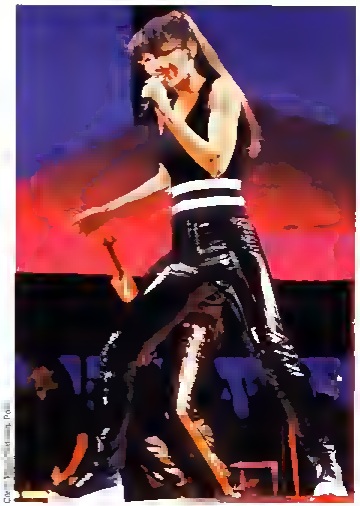
Colin Thatcher, the former Saskatchewan cabinet minister who was sentenced to life in prison for the brutal murder of his ex-wife JoAnn Wilson in 1983, has applied to be eligible for early parole under the controversial faint hope clause. That provision, open to anyone who has served at least 15 years, triggers a judicial review.

Chanteuse at the bar

The ownership of a song is now in the hands of a Supreme Court judge in British Columbia following the conclusion of an elaborate eight-month trial in which pop star Sarah McLachlan was sued by former drummer Darryl Neudorf, who assisted with the singer's debut album 11 years ago.

Canada Day in Twainville

Country superstar Shania Twain returned to her true roots last week, marking Canada Day in the Northern Ontario mining town of Timmins where she grew up. For her first concert there since she made it big in Nashville, Tenn., the town's population of 45,000 swelled by thousands as visitors from all over the continent came to see the belle with the famous midriff on the final stop of a worldwide tour. Ottawa had the Snowbirds, Quebec a nurses' strike. "Twainville" had the sultry soloist who kept them rocking in the aisles from the opening bars of *Honey, I'm Home*.



Clem Tillier/Reuters, Pool

Testing the limits of free speech

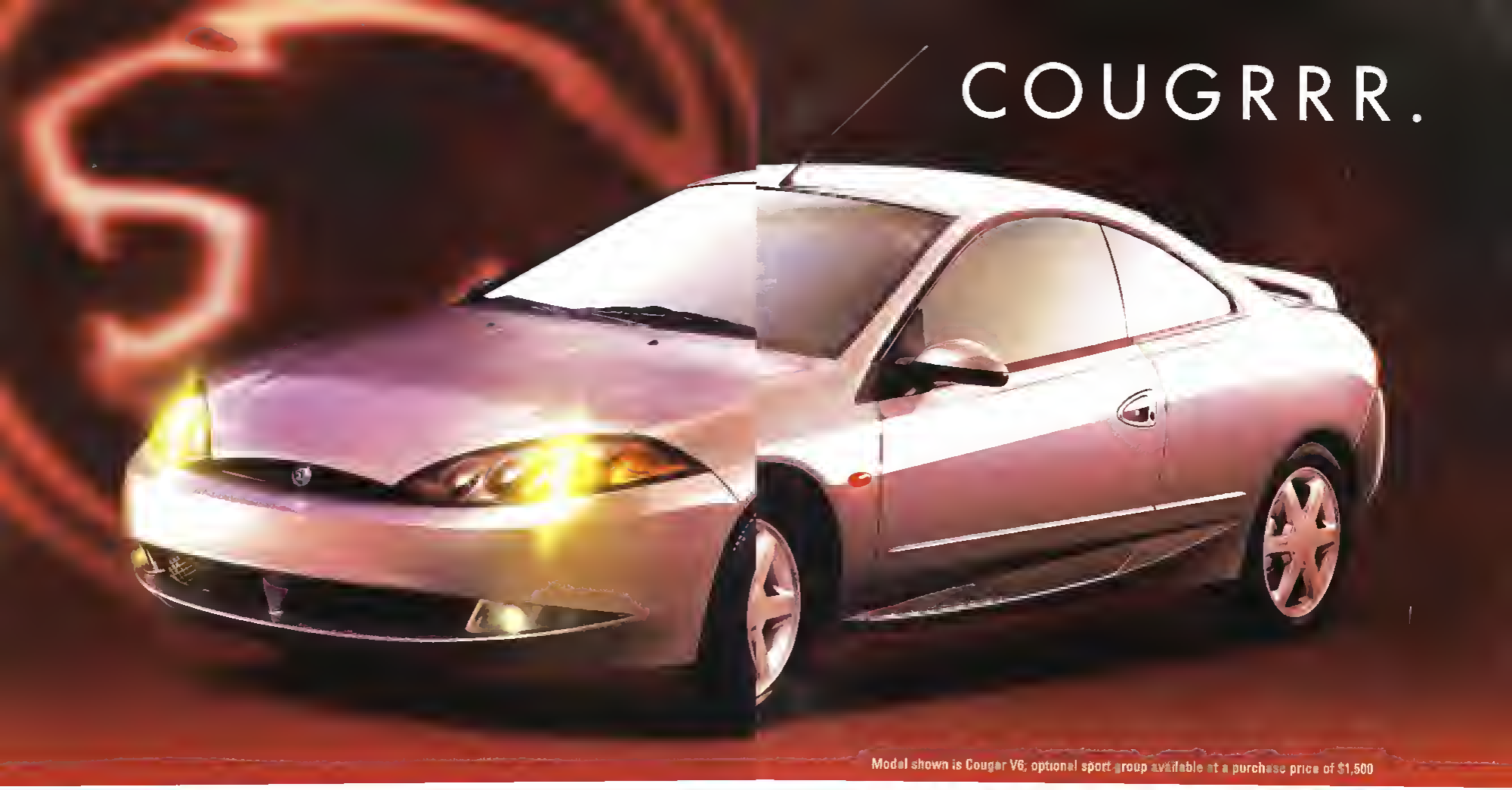
Canada's six-year-old child pornography law is headed for the Supreme Court of Canada after the B.C. Court of Appeal found the wording to be too broad and unwieldy. The judgment upheld a lower court ruling in January dismissing possession charges against a retired city planner, John Sharpe, 65, of Vancouver. Reform Leader Preston Manning demanded Parliament be recalled to override the courts. Justice Minister Anne McLellan, while not ruling out using the notwithstanding clause of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms to set aside the judgment, instead urged the Supreme Court to hear the B.C. government's appeal quickly. In the majority 2-1 decision, B.C. Justice Anne Rowles said the law effectively criminalizes possession of material created by people from their own imagination without any need to show direct harm to anyone else. "The charter," she wrote, "should never permit the state to regulate an individual's private recorded thoughts, no matter how objectionable those thoughts might be." Simple possession of child porn will not be prosecuted in British Columbia until the appeal is heard, but distribution, production and possession for distribution remain crimes.

Tyrell's battle



Ian Waldie, Toronto Star/Reuters, Pool

Tyrell Dueck, the 13-year-old Saskatchewan boy who chose to put his faith in God instead of chemotherapy in defiance of the medical establishment, died in a Saskatoon hospital. The Dueck family fought two court orders to refuse conventional treatment after bone cancer was diagnosed in November. One of three children in a deeply religious family, Tyrell spent three weeks at an alternative clinic in Mexico in March and was said at the time to be recovering.



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Jim Bourg/Reuters

Bush and wife Laura during a New Hampshire campaign stop: unprecedented endorsements and record amounts of campaign cash

The Bush Bandwagon

George 'Dub-ya' races out of the starting gates for the 2000 presidential election

By Andrew Phillips in Austin

George W. Bush has been running for president for barely a month, but already the legend of the Reluctant Candidate is being buffed to a high sheen. The people who know him well are full of stories. How he never really thought about the big job. How he was genuinely surprised—"dumbfounded" in the words of one old friend—that folks were thinking of him like that. How he finally concluded that he had a duty—even a "calling"—to go for it. Clay Johnson, Bush's onetime roommate and current executive assistant, adds his version of the tale. A friend of the Bush family took her concerns to the Texas governor early this year. Wouldn't campaigning for the presidency open up his wife and teenage daughters to all kinds of unwelcome attention? she asked. "He was afraid of that," Johnson recalls, "but he said, 'If I don't run, who will? If not me, who?' "

Who indeed? The candidacy of the man known, to distinguish him from his famous father, as "W."—or "Dub-ya" as they say in Texas—is a genuine political phenomenon. His rivals for the Republican nomination in 2000 are eating his dust. A recent poll gives him a staggering 61 per cent of the vote among Republican contenders (Elizabeth Dole is a distant second at 11 per cent). He handily beats Al Gore, the leading Democrat, in every matchup. Political professionals in Washington and Austin, the state capital, say they've never seen anything like it. The closest parallel goes back to 1952, when the Republicans laid their nomination at the feet of Gen. Dwight Eisenhower, who had done nothing less than save the world from fascism. There is no mystery—the party smells victory after enduring eight years of Bill Clinton in the White House. "There's a thirst for a winner," says Reggie Bashur, a Republican consultant in Austin who has worked with both George Bushes, *père et fils*. "This is a man who has proven he can win."

It takes a rare combination of factors to soar so high—with so little apparent effort. A famous name, to be sure: he was buoyed in early polls because many people confused him with his father, the president defeated by Clinton in 1992. A built-in political network: the Bush family's legendary Rolodex is at his disposal. A solid record in a major state: he is just six months into his second term as governor of Texas. An attractive if ambiguous message: his slogan of "compassionate conservatism" appeals to voters weary of sour-puss lectures from the right. And, importantly, a cheerful, winning personality: he's a natural on the campaign trail.

That has been obvious ever since Bush began formally appealing for votes in mid-June. Last week, it was California, where he took aim at the increasingly important Hispanic vote ("*el sueno Americano*"—the American dream—is for you, too, he assured them in his serviceable Spanish). But he started, as every candidate must, in Iowa and New Hampshire, which will hold the first votes early in the new year. On a foggy morning in New Castle, N.H., with the salt tang of the Atlantic in the air, Bush set out on the trail he hopes will lead to victory in 16 months. Up close with some of the most sophisticated voters in the United States, the ones who actually get to meet presidential candidates in their living rooms and church halls instead of just seeing them in TV ads, he managed to look like there was no place he would rather be.

Jeff Howard, an adviser to the Bush campaign in New Hampshire, was beside himself with glee. "This is a hard state to get enthusiasm out of," he said. "No matter what it is, we're agin it. We're used to shaking a politician's hand three times before we make up our minds. But he's got the magic." At a sold-out lunch for Republican women in Manchester, state Representative Susan Franks voiced the common yearning. "We keep losing because we're not appealing to the middle," she said. "We need someone who can bring us back to the centre, and it looks like we've found him."

All that translates into unprecedented numbers of endorsements and, most importantly, record amounts of cash. In the early summer of the year *before* the election, Republican officeholders are tripping over themselves to jump on his bandwagon. Twenty governors and 126 congressmen have endorsed Bush. He has raised more money in a shorter period of time than anyone before him—a staggering $36.3 million (U.S.) in the first half of 1999, twice Gore's take. Each week, he scoops up more—$2 million at a single event in Washington. His rivals are withering on the vine, and Bush seems to be fighting the general election already. Conventional wisdom dictates that candidates appeal to the party faithful to win the nomination, then move to the centre. By coming out of the starting gate so hard and fast, Bush is effectively skipping the first stage. Rather than tack right to win over Republican activists, he is pitching his message at the middle and taking on Gore right away.

The message, summed up in his catchphrase of "compassionate conservatism," is part image, part substance. On the stump, Bush talks about things that have been absent from Republican rhetoric—helping the poor, minorities, new immigrants. "Prosperity without purpose," he says, "is simple materi-

'When I was young and irresponsible, I was young and irresponsible,' says Bush, but he won't give details

alism." He distances himself from signature Republican positions of the mid-'90s, such as opposition to affirmative action and cracking down on illegal immigrants. He refuses to make opposition to abortion a so-called litmus test for appointing judges to the Supreme Court. Some hardline conservatives are outraged, a few are already talking about quitting the Republicans and backing a third-party candidate.

No one should be fooled, though, by the "compassionate" speeches. Bush's record in Texas shows he is a true conservative—further right than his New England-raised father ever was. He is pro-life, pro-gun and staunchly pro-death penalty. He believes strongly in free trade, and cultivated closer business relations with his NAFTA neighbour Mexico. On his watch, Texas enacted its biggest tax cut ever—$2 billion (U.S.)—and enjoys a budget surplus of $6.4 billion. He is a committed Christian. He has often talked of how he "came to the Lord" at the age of 39 after a conversation with Billy Graham. He reads the Bible every day, and has said a key moment in his decision to seek the presidency came in January when he attended a private family service and heard the pastor talk about the reluctance of Moses to become a leader. "The sermon spoke directly to my heart," Bush said later. He makes frequent speeches urging young people to resist temptation and embrace sexual abstinence until marriage.

As governor, too, Bush pushed conservative issues like making schools more accountable for students' performance and enlisting private "faith-based" organizations in solving social issues. He did it, though, in a way that won him friends in both parties. The governor's office in Texas is comparatively weak, anyone who holds the job must work closely with the legislature to get anything done. Bush invited the speakers of the state house of representatives and senate (both Democrats for most of his term) to weekly breakfasts at the governor's mansion—a gesture that paid off in legislative achievements. He's a backslapper and a jokester who coins a corny nickname for anyone he deals with (David Weeks, a political consultant in Austin who shoots quail with the governor, is "Weeksy"). Almost no one has a bad word about him. When he was re-elected in a landslide last November, he won 49 per cent of votes cast by Hispanics and 27 per cent by blacks, two groups long allergic to Republicans.

All that would be remarkable enough from anyone—let alone a man whose own cousin, John Ellis, once said was "on the road to nowhere at age 40." George W., 53 on July 6, was, to say the least, a late bloomer. Those who know the Bush family agree he showed no political ambition as a young man. It was his studious younger brother Jeb, now governor of Florida, whom the family looked to as the son most likely to succeed. Young George, though the elder son, drifted through his 20s and much of his 30s. Clay Johnson, now the governor's top aide, met him at age 15 when they roomed together at the Phillips Academy, a tony prep school in Andover, Mass. Two Texans thrown together in what amounted to boot camp for the eastern Establishment, they bonded immediately. George, Johnson recalled in his office in the Texas Capitol in Austin, was the same then as he is now—energetic, enthusiastic, funny, a people person rather than a scholar. "There were the usual cliques—athletes versus the brains," Johnson remembers, "but George functioned across all the lines."

The two went on to Yale University, and roomed there as well. They were fraternity brothers at Delta Kappa Epsilon, known as the Dekes. Bush was interested in football, beer and girls. "I thought *Animal House* was written about the Dekes at Yale," says Johnson. They graduated in the spring of 1967, protests against the Vietnam war were raging across U.S. campuses but Bush, says Johnson, took no interest.

He moved to Houston and took a long time to find himself. He did his military service with the Texas Air National Guard, flying F-102 fighter jets. He helped run a mentoring program for inner-city youth in Houston. He spent much of his 20s living at a Houston singles complex called Château Dijon, partying and pursuing women. He has said, famously, that "when I was young and irresponsible, I was young and irresponsible"—but draws the line at filling in the details. Rumours abound, but teams of reporters and opposition researchers have failed to turn up much. In May, *The Wall Street Journal* published one of the more curious examples of modern political coverage—a front-page article detailing gossip that Bush used illegal drugs, was photographed dancing naked on a bar, and bought cocaine at his father's presidential inauguration in 1988. The paper then concluded that it could find no one to substantiate the rumours. Johnson, his old friend, firmly believes that the talk is greatly exaggerated. One of the governor's fund-raisers, he says, asked Bush directly what he meant by being "young and irresponsible." "The answer was, 'I drank beer and chased women.' The guy said, 'That's what I hoped you'd say.'"

Bush does get asked, though, how he squares his lectures to young people about morality and abstinence with his rowdy past. His stock answer: I've learned from my mistakes. One of the big questions of the age, he told a TV interviewer last week, is: "Will the baby boomers grow up?"—a question that neatly contrasts his upright current lifestyle to Clinton's scandalous private life. What finally straightened him out, says Bush, was "children, having a wife, and religion." He married Laura Welch, a librarian from Midland, Tex., in 1977; they have twin 16-year-old daughters, Barbara and Jenna. He gave up drinking, he says, the morning after his 40th birthday—a few months after he got religion with Billy Graham.

The other question mark over Bush's early career involves money—and how much he traded on his family name to become rich. In 1975, after earning an MBA from Harvard, he set out for Midland to make money in the oil business, as his father had done before him. He was not a great success. He started a company called Arbusto Energy (*arbusto* is Spanish for bush). An uncle, New York City money manager Jonathan Bush, recruited investors. Many of them, according to *The Dallas Morning News*, were friends and associates of the Bush family—whose patriarch, George Sr., was a candidate for president and then Ronald Reagan's vice-president. In 1986, George Jr. sold his stake to Harken Oil & Gas of Texas in a sweetheart deal that netted him $320,000 (U.S.). Critics charged then that Harken was really after drilling leases in the Persian Gulf and wanted the goodwill of his powerful father.

What made George W. rich, though, was not oil but baseball. After an unhappy period in Washington as a political fixer for his father, he returned to Texas in 1989. Bush had always been obsessed with baseball (one of his standard lines is that he didn't want to be president, he wanted to be Willie Mays). He used his family and political connections to put together a group to buy the Texas Rangers, then a struggling franchise. Over the next several years, he and his partners led a campaign to use taxpayers' money to build a handsome new stadium, The Ballpark in Arlington. That transformed the team into a money-spinner. Bush's original investment of just $606,000 (U.S.) turned into a payoff of $15 million when he sold his share in the Rangers last year.

Criticisms of his rise, however, now seem like the carping of sore losers. Bush showed he could win big by beating popular Democrat Ann Richards (who derided him as "Shrub"—the little Bush) for the governor's seat in 1994, then winning re-election last year. Now, though, he faces a test on a far bigger stage. He has made a few mistakes—speaking mysteriously of "Kosovians" and "Grecians" while discussing the Balkan war, and mixing up Slovakia and Slovenia. His mystique, though, is big enough and the campaign is young enough that those slips have not been held against him. Yet. With 16 months before voting day, there is ample time for things to go wrong—a major gaffe, a new scandal, a third-party revolt that would split the conservative vote and help the Democrats. The hard reality is that anyone who flies so high, so fast, has a long way to fall. Even a man who insists he never really wanted the job. m





AFP

His father holds George W. in Midland, Tex., in 1948, beside his mother, Barbara (left), his grandmother, Dorothy, and his grandfather, Prescott Bush; the two Georges with Laura and Barbara in Maine in mid-June; name recognition

Hillary homes in on New York

When Hillary Clinton and her husband went to New York City last week, the President unexpectedly sat alone at a fund-raising matinee performance of *The Iceman Cometh*. Hillary, it emerged, had ducked out to shop for a new house with her daughter, Chelsea, in the city and its suburbs. This week, she takes another step towards running for the Senate from New York by conducting a so-called listening tour through upstate communities. One thing she won't have to worry about is being called as a witness in a trial arising from the Whitewater land scandal. Webster Hubbell, her onetime business associate in Arkansas, pleaded guilty to two charges of lying and tax fraud—making a trial unnecessary. The Watergate-era law empowering her archnemesis, special prosecutor Kenneth Starr, officially expired last week, but their sparring isn't quite over. He will continue investigating her over the firing of White House travel staff in 1993.



Reuters/Corbis-Bettmann

Big money, earlier than ever

Funds raised by June 30 for leading presidential candidates, in U.S. dollars.

George W. Bush	$36.3 million
Al Gore	$18.2 million
Bill Bradley	$11.5 million
John McCain	$6.1 million
Elizabeth Dole	$3.4 million

Preliminary figures

Republican Democrat



Digging up the horror

A Canadian forensic team in Kosovo sifts through the grisly evidence of war crimes

By Barry Came in Vlastica

The object in Dr. Peter Markesteyn's rubber-gloved hand looks like a chunk of burned charcoal, the colour of wood ash, about the size and shape of a walnut. After rolling it around in his fingers for a moment, the Dutch-born pathologist, who has just retired as Manitoba's chief medical examiner, finally issues a pronouncement. "Adipocere," he says with clinical detachment. "It's what human fat turns into several weeks after death, maybe sooner if it's been burned." He lifts his eyes, nods towards the collapsed wall of a house, where a half-dozen Canadian police officers are digging into a mound of rubble. Working carefully with trowels and wire brushes, they pull from the mound shreds of blackened clothing, fragments of white bone and more walnuts of dead fat. "It's all that's left of them now," says Markesteyn, a little grimly, "13 men, women and children."

They came from two families, named Shabani and Hyseni. And they died last April 30 on the spot where their remains lie buried, in the village of Vlastica in southeastern Kosovo, not far from the border with Yugoslavia. Two men did the killing, according to eyewitness Nehat Shabani. "One was dressed in a soldier's uniform, the other wore soldier's pants but a civilian shirt," he recalled last week as he stood on a narrow dirt lane in Vlastica, quietly watching the Canadians, a nine-member team of forensic specialists drawn from police forces across Canada, dig up the bones of his relatives and neighbours. "They gathered them all in the kitchen and then shot them," he continued, speaking in halting but clear French. "My grandfather, my uncle, my aunt and my little cousin Fisnik, who was only 2½. Then, others came and stole everything that was valuable inside the house before setting fire to it. Afterwards, a bulldozer came and knocked everything down."

Nehat Shabani does not know the identity of those who murdered his family, not, apparently, of those who came later to loot and burn and conceal the evidence of the atrocity that occurred during the height of NATO's air war. But if the 35-year-old ethnic Albanian Kosovar someday sees a measure of justice done in the affair, it will be largely due to the efforts of the Canadians who last week were busily working amid the ruins of his grandfather's house. "There's an awful lot of bones down there," said the team's leader, RCMP Insp. Brian Strongman, as he took a break from the painstaking job of recreating the horrific events that took place in Vlastica on April 30.

Below, Strongman's team—composed of retired and serving police officers from the RCMP, the Ontario Provincial Police and the Vancouver police department's homicide squad, along with pathologist Markesteyn—were slowly clearing the debris from what used to be the kitchen of Shabani's grandfather's home. The mound containing the human remains had been crisscrossed with string, arranged into a numbered and lettered grid. Beside each square in the grid was a plastic bag. "What we're doing now is bagging the bones according to the grid," explained Strongman. "That may help the doc identify separate individuals. Trouble is, whoever bulldozed this place mixed up all the bones." The inspector paused to mop his brow in the 30° heat. "Those vertebrae over there, for instance," he continued with a gesture towards the mound, "I'll bet they belong to the ribs in the next grid."



Photo by John Ibbitson

Examining human remains in Vlastica, Canadians at work on the site (opposite); an international effort

It is clearly a gruesome task. But it is essential if the UN war crimes tribunal in The Hague ever hopes to successfully prosecute those who have already been indicted for war crimes, including Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic and his four chief subordinates, as well as other suspects that the chief prosecutor, Canadian jurist Louise Arbour, has promised to indict as soon as possible. "Our job is to assemble courtroom evidence for the war crimes tribunal," said Markesteyn. "We have to identify the victims, through analysis of bones, clothing, DNA and the like. Then, we determine what we call in the business 'NASHU'—whether the death was caused by natural, accidental, suicidal, homicidal or unknown reasons."

The Canadians who were toiling under a gruelling sun in Vlastica last week are one small cog in a huge international effort to provide the tribunal with the kind of forensic evidence that will stand up in a court of law. Similar teams of forensic experts from other countries are at work all across Kosovo. The largest by far is a contingent from the U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation, which arrived in Kosovo in mid-June just as U.S. authorities offered a reward of up to $5 million (U.S.) to anyone providing information that aids the capture of alleged war criminals in Yugoslavia, including Milosevic. Last week, there were 56 FBI agents at work on three separate sites of suspected atrocities around the Djakovica area in western Kosovo. They brought with them 43,000 kg of equipment, including Humvee trucks, tents, communications gear and portable laboratories.

The other national contingents are much smaller. There is a five-member Dutch outfit and a seven-member Swiss group. Teams of similar size are expected to arrive this week from Germany and Denmark. North of Pristina, 20 forensic experts from Britain's Scotland Yard are investigating several massacre sites. Farther north, outside the town of Izbitza near Mitrovica, French specialists are exploring what tribunal spokesman Paul Risley described as "something of a mystery." Aerial photographs taken by NATO warplanes early in April uncovered what at the time seemed to be mass graves containing up to 150 bodies. "All those bodies have disappeared now," said Risley. "Judging from the evidence the French have turned up, it looks like bodies were there at some point but somebody came and took them all away. We have no idea where they might be now."

Precisely when the various national contingents will be able to present their evidence remains an open question. But Risley expects they will continue working for several weeks, or even months. More indictments may soon be forthcoming, however, perhaps before Arbour leaves the tribunal later this summer to take up an appointment on the Supreme Court. She is tentatively scheduled to visit Kosovo, as well as Macedonia and Albania, in mid-July.

In the meantime, Nehat Shabani watches the Canadians at work in Vlastica and waits for justice. Even without the tragedy that befell his family members on April 30, he had already experienced grievous suffering. Three weeks earlier, a Serbian soldier clubbed his three-week-old son to death. "My wife was holding the boy in her arms and he wouldn't stop crying," he recalled. "So the soldier hit him on the head with his rifle butt." The boy's name was Liritn, Albanian for liberation. Shabani's grandfather gave the boy the name, because he had been born the day before NATO launched its air war. The grandfather would not long outlive his great-grandson. Rifat Shabani was 80 when he was shot to death in his own kitchen. ■

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Who gets the blame?



A Belgrade journalist calls on Serbs to probe crimes against Albanians

Now political editor of Yugoslavia's independent newsweekly NIN, Svetlana Djurdjevic-Lukic has regularly reported from Kosovo over the past eight years. Last week, she returned from her first visit since the war. Maclean's asked her to describe how she felt about the growing evidence of Serbian war crimes

By Svetlana Djurdjevic-Lukic

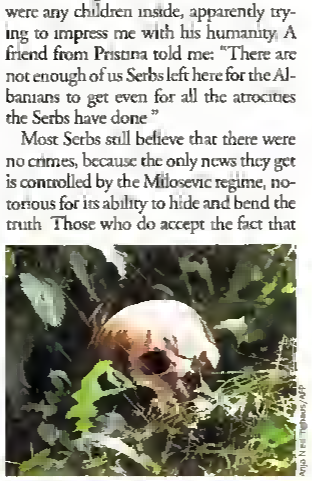
I have never voted for Slobodan Milosevic, and as a journalist I have always been critical of his regime. I have Albanian friends. So when *Maclean's* asked me for my reaction to the atrocities in Kosovo, I war of two minds. Do I have to feel guilty, just for being a Serb? How do Canadians, citizens of a NATO country, feel about the many innocents who died from the bombs—a three-year-old girl sitting on her potty in a bathroom in Batajnica, a 16-year-old mathematics champion from Varvarin, or my 22-year-old cousin, who just happened to be on his mandatory army service, somewhere along the border with Albania?

However, a crime is a crime. In Kosovo, Jim Landale, spokesman for the international war crimes tribunal in The Hague, showed me the lists of the mass graves, the names of the victims: women, old men, children of 2 like my daughter, children of 4 like my son. Father Sava, abbot of the Decani monastery, talked to me for hours about decapitated heads left in the wells and haystacks, bodies found in the sewer pits, excrement on mosque walls, trailer-loads of women and children carted to the border, the burning and looting done by the people who call themselves Serbs.

I saw a whole street, packed with Albanian shops and cafés I used to hang out in, burned to the ground. I heard stories about Serbs who burned their own houses as they moved out, so that nothing was left for the Albanians. (How immeasurable is that hate, and how easy it must have been for them to burn the Albanian houses if they were so willing to burn their own.)

A reserve policeman told me before he left Kosovo that he took good care not to throw hand grenades into houses if there were any children inside, apparently trying to impress me with his humanity. A friend from Pristina told me: "There are not enough of us Serbs left here for the Albanians to get even for all the atrocities the Serbs have done."

Most Serbs still believe that there were no crimes, because the only news they get is controlled by the Milosevic regime, notorious for its ability to hide and bend the truth. Those who do accept the fact that



the Serbs have committed terrible crimes are quick to offer counterarguments that cannot be disregarded: we were at war, the Albanians started it, the West knew what war going to happen and wanted an excuse to install the NATO forces here, the West has eyes only for the Albanian casualties, not the Serbs who are now being expelled and killed in front of KFOR soldiers, nor the Serbs who were killed by the Kosovo Liberation Army in the months before the bombing.



An Albanian child mourns a murdered friend; a skull near Pristina (opposite): regret

The dominant feeling of absence of responsibility on the Serbian side is mostly based on extremely long memory, so rarely found now in the West, and the impression that the international community is using double standards. What is 10 years of Milosevic's rule compared with 500 years in which the Orthodox Christian Serbs suffered murder, looting and burning by Muslims, including the Albanians? Why are the Serbs not allowed to defend their country against separatists and terrorists, while Turkey and Spain are allowed to do so, sometimes even more brutally?

However, I have returned with the encouraging impression that something is changing in the minds of the Serbs living in Kosovo. These people have been fanatic followers of Milosevic and their votes have secured his rule ever since 1990 (because the elections were boycotted by the Albanians, mere tens of thousands of Serbian votes in Kosovo enabled him to take almost all of the Kosovo seats in the Serbian Assembly). Fascinated by his charisma, they truly believed in his promises that Kosovo will remain Serbian property forever. Many of them interpreted his pledges as a carte blanche—a licence to do things that normally bring punishment.

But many of them, suppressed by Milosevic's regime because they could spoil his celebration of "victory," are now beginning to think differently. They are starting to realize that his underlying goal was not enhancing the state and national identity, but gaining power, authority and money. Exposed to the uncontrollable revenge of the Albanian population, they realize that the crimes cannot be concealed. "We are going through hell now—Serbian houses are being taken over by the Albanians, the Serbs are molested in the streets, sometimes killed," said a journalist from state-owned television, whose reporting in previous years contributed much to Milosevic's rise. Now, he bitterly regrets what he did in the past few years. He had not been out of his apartment in Pristina for more than 10 days. "KFOR may be inefficient, but we are in a far better position than the Albanians, who could have been molested and killed at any moment over a period of two and a half months, with no protection at all," he said.

He recalled how German chancellor Willy Brandt had, in 1970, knelt in front of the memorial to Jews who died in the Warsaw ghetto. "In order to stop the spiral of violence," the journalist said, "we will have to find a Willy Brandt of our own who is ready to kneel in front of all the innocent victims."

What needs to be done now is to arrest as many individual war criminals as possible, free the media, and let local Serbian witnesses speak to the nation, with the credibility they will carry, about what they saw. At the same time, the most reputable Serbian journalists should be given access to the mass graves and data on the victims. The killing of innocents—for reasons of state, or religion, or revolution—has happened throughout history. It is not a Serbian invention, and I do not think Serbs as a people deserve to carry the burden of damnation from all over the world. It is those who committed the crimes who should be blamed, and we should find out leaders guilty by ourselves. m

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A deepening chill on Cuba



Castro and Chrétien in 1998–some 'ice'

During Prime Minister Jean Chrétien's controversial trip to Havana in April, 1998, he was criticized for appearing to support the regime of Cuban dictator Fidel Castro. Chrétien claimed he had argued forcefully for the release of four prominent dissidents. But last March, the so-called Group of Four were sentenced to long prison terms. And since then, Castro has exerted even tighter police control over the population.

According to Archibald Rittet, an economist at Ottawa's Carleton University, the Prime Minister was deeply embarrassed by Castro's decision to imprison the four. Last week, Chrétien appeared to get a measure of revenge. Just before Carlos Fernandez de Cossio Dominguez, Cuba's new ambassador to Canada, was to present his credentials to the Governor General, Ottawa let it be known that Chrétien had cancelled all ministerial trips to the country. "It's a continuation of the frosting of the situation since the dissidents were put in jail," Chrétien said. "We are still engaged with them, but we have to put some northern ice in the middle of it." That was not the only problem facing de Cossio. FirstKey Project Technologies of Mississauga, Ont., complained that Cuba had reneged on a $700-million contract to revamp its electrical grid. Other firms, meanwhile, said they were cutting back on investment in Cuba. Not only are diplomatic relations in a deep freeze—the business community also seems to be catching a cold.

Blueprint for peace in Northern Ireland

Retired Canadian general John de Chastelain was poised to take on a crucial role under a peace plan for Northern Ireland put forward by Britain and Ireland. The blueprint, issued after five days of fruitless talks among Belfast's feuding parties, calls for a coalition government by July 15. De Chastelain, who is in charge of disarming the Irish Republican Army and other paramilitaries, would begin that process within days, and would complete removal of all weapons by May, 2000. All parties said they would discuss the plan before reacting.

Death for the Kurds' leader

The relatives of fallen Turkish soldiers cheered as Kurdish rebel leader Abdullah Ocalan was sentenced to die by hanging. Throughout his four-week trial on a Turkish prison island, Ocalan warned that his execution would unleash a wave of violence. After the sentencing, there was a surge in attacks by Ocalan's Kurdistan Workers Party, part of an independence struggle that has cost more than 30,000 lives over the past 15 years. But Kurds in Turkey and around the world avoided the violent outbursts that greeted Ocalan's capture in Kenya in February. Because he received the death sentence, his case will automatically be appealed. It must also go before the Turkish parliament, which has not authorized an execution in 15 years.

UN gives Canada top spot

For the sixth year in a row, a United Nations agency has ranked Canada as the No. 1 country in overall human development. The UN Development Program lists Canada as tops among 174 surveyed in health, education levels, life expectancy and standard of living. The runners-up were Norway and the United States; the lowest-rated nation was Sierra Leone. Canadian politicians often cite the annual survey as proof that Canada is the best country in which to live.

Trillion-dollar budget debate

President Bill Clinton proposed greater social spending after White House estimates showed the U.S. budget surplus will be $1 trillion (U.S.) over the next 10 years, higher than previously projected. As part of his plan, Clinton wants to set aside $794 billion to strengthen Medicare, including a new prescription drug plan for the elderly. Republicans, however, want to use the extra money to fund deep tax cuts.

Cable car in death plunge

A French cable car lifting workers to an international alpine space observatory plunged 80 m to the ground, killing all 20 people onboard. The accident near the resort town of St.-Etienne-en-Dévoluy, 650 km southeast of Paris, was the worst cable car crash in French history.

Barak takes charge

Israel's prime minister-elect, Ehud Barak, agreed to meet Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat soon in a bid to jump-start the Mideast peace process. The decision came shortly after Barak said he had formed a broad-based coalition government that will command at least 75 of the 120 seats in the Knesset when he takes over this week.

Tragedy in South Korea

An inferno that engulfed their seaside camp killed 19 South Korean kindergarten children and four teachers. Mosquito coils may have sparked the fire at Hwasong, 100 km southwest of Seoul. Police charged the kindergarten headmistress with involuntary homicide and sought six others accused of negligence.

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A 'very excellent' comic

Award-winning actor Martin Short turns his attention to daytime television



Todd Korol by Maclean's

Short at the Banff Festival: he has won over Hollywood and Broadway with his humour

To borrow a phrase from comedian **Martin Short**'s nerdish *SCTV* character Ed Grimley, "It was very excellent, I must say." Last month, Short received the Banff Television Festival's Sir Peter Ustinov Comedy Network Award, which recognizes outstanding comedic achievement. It was the Hamilton native's second honour in recent weeks. The 49-year-old also won a Tony in June for his performance in the Broadway musical *Little Me*. "And there's an Emmy or two," he says of the accolades he's accrued, "but who's counting?"

Short has been giving award-winning performances since he joined the cast of the hit TV series *SCTV* in 1982. After leaving the show in 1984, he joined *Saturday Night Live*, and went on to showcase his off-the-wall humour in such Hollywood films as the *Three Amigos!* and *Father of the Bride*. Now, Short, based in Los Angeles and raising three children with his wife, Nancy, is entering a new realm of entertainment: host of a daytime talk-fest, *The Martin Short Show*, which premières in the fall. To him, the move is a logical creative evolution. "Sometimes, I'll go on a talk show to promote a movie and I'll think afterward, 'Gee, if only the movies were as funny as that 11 minutes,' " says Short. "It's the one area I've never mined." While waiting to see if he can measure up to *Oprah*, Short can bask in the distinction that comes from being Canada's most decorated comedian. "It's a nice cherry on the cake," he says smiling. "It says, we like the work you're doing, keep at it."

No longer a *Morning* person

When relative unknown Avril Benoit, then 31, was hired two years ago to co-host the new CBC Radio flagship show, *This Morning*—the successor to **Peter Gzowski**'s popular *Morningside*—she was overwhelmed and surprised. Last week, she received another surprise courtesy of the CBC—Benoit was informed that as of July 9, she will no longer be working on the show. According to network management, *This Morning* would have a stronger identity with just one host, Benoit's co-worker, CBC veteran **Michael Enright**. "I'm still puzzled," says Benoit, who moved from Montreal to Toronto for the position, "but upbeat."



Benoit: upbeat after losing her job

Continuing to work on *This Morning* after the announcement has been "tough," she concedes, but she is buoyed by messages from listeners and colleagues. "The response has been almost uniformly sympathetic," says Benoit, who thanked Enright on air last week for his loyalty and friendship. Though she doesn't know what her next career move will be, the network has asked her to stay, and she is "weighing some interesting options—some inside the CBC and some outside."

After July 9, Benoit plans to spend the summer "thinking about things," first at her cabin in Mont Tremblant, Que., and later on a kayaking trip in Nunavut. Two facts are certain, though: the 33-year-old Benoit and her two young children will remain in Toronto. And Benoit will definitely stay in journalism. "It's my passion," she says. "I can't imagine doing anything else."

NET GAINS

E-commerce is changing the way that business is conducted worldwide—but Canadian companies are slow to adapt

All stones by **Warren Caragata**



The scene is a picturesque little Italian town featured in an IBM television commercial for electronic commerce. A stuffy-looking American couple stumble across a small shop that looks as ancient as the woman who runs it. "Look, they make olive oil," the tourist lady proclaims. Her tone is clear: this is a quaint and tradition-steeped enterprise. "We have three stores in Ohio," the tourist lady says proudly. The old woman is quick to reply: "Ohio? We sell in Ohio, and California, and Canada, and Argentina." How? Of course. The tourist lady is chastened: "They're on the Internet," she says.

Or, as yet another ad puts it, isn't everybody on the Internet? Not yet, but they're getting there—fast. At least one person in 49 per cent of Canadian households now has Internet access, at home or work, according to figures from the Toronto office of International Data Corp. (Canada) Ltd. About 10 million Canadians counted themselves Internet users last year—and projections estimate that will climb to 23.9 million (of a population of about 32.5 million) by 2003. Worldwide, Internet traffic doubles every 100 days. Those soaring numbers have a huge impact on the way consumers shop and businesses function. IDC's forecasts for e-commerce are phenomenal. Revenues in 1998 in Canada: $5.3 billion; five years after that: $80.4 billion. That's a growth rate of 1,416 per cent. Anyone who didn't believe the Web was the next wave of commerce is about to get trampled. This looks like the gold rush on amphetamines.

Illustration by Pierre Zamfir for Maclean's

Business on the Internet started with the purchase of software and computers, but it is quickly becoming the means for many consumers to buy just about anything—from Beanie Babies on auction sites, to bulky big-ticket items like cars and household appliances. Even flea markets are getting in the game: last week, Halifax-based Salter New Media, an affiliate of the same company that produces the comedy series *This Hour Has 22 Minutes*, announced that it is expanding its Bargoon.com (*www.bargoon.com*), an auction and flea-market site already operating in Canada, into the United States. "Anything where information is part of the purchase decision is a candidate for electronic commerce," says David Pecaut, an Iowa native now living in Toronto who heads the worldwide e-commerce practice at U.S.-based Boston Consulting Group. Confounding the skeptics, even clothing is becoming a popular Internet buy, although Paul Walters, Sears Canada Inc.'s chief executive, doubts the day will come when a woman shops online for an evening dress. But otherwise—just about anything goes.

In 1998, only $688 million of Canadian retail trade—or less than one per cent of all sales—was transacted on the Net. But a study conducted by IDC for the Retail Council of Canada and IBM Canada Ltd. predicts that within five years the number will rise to 4.6 per cent. After that, "we really don't know how it's going to turn out," says Joe Greene, director of Internet research at IDC and one of the study's authors. But Greene and others expect the growth rate to quicken as electronic commerce moves into the mainstream. "We're now at the beginning of an e-commerce explosion," says James McQuivey, a senior analyst at Forrester Research in Cambridge, Mass., which is a leader among the firms tracking Internet trends. He believes individual access to the Net is one of the few limits on how far expansion will go.

E-commerce appears to be rebuilding the foundations of modern business. "It's not just a shopping channel," says David Marcus, head of IBM Canada Ltd.'s retail consulting practice. The World Wide Web has created a new breed of businesses, mostly American still, such as Amazon.com Inc., Yahoo! Inc. and E*Trade Group Inc. Established firms are now forced to remake themselves at a frenzied pace to take on new competitors in a phenomenon that Microsoft Corp. chairman Bill Gates calls "punctuated chaos," where change is interrupted only by short periods of stability. David Leslie, the Toronto-based CEO of consulting firm Ernst & Young, says that successful business leaders must understand that old ways of doing things are under constant threat. "People have to be bold," he says. "You have to be prepared to risk your traditional businesses."

The changes are coming in many industries, but a few sectors stand out for the magnitude of the transformation. Canadian retailers are being forced to take to the Net to defend their turf against American players. Canadians weaned on bank machines and debit cards are taking easily to the Web to handle their financial needs, with online stock trading now menacing the traditional brokerage business. In the auto business, consumers are buying cars on the Net, while the industry ponders how to roll custom-made vehicles off assembly lines to fill Web purchase orders. Travel is under siege: agents must get online or risk being pushed aside by cyber-competitors that include Microsoft. In the media business, packaging existing content rather than producing original material is becoming the ticket to success for new competitors like Yahoo! and Canada's Sympatico.

Yet for most Canadian businesses, the question is whether they fully appreciate that there is no more business as usual. The answer appears to be no. "People have not perceived this as the threat it really is," says Pecaut. The Retail Council study

The reluctance of businesses to go online causes a steady flow of dollars to the south

released in mid-June bears out Pecaut's view. It shows that only one-quarter of the top Canadian retailers are selling online, compared with half of their U.S. counterparts.

This reluctance to adopt e-commerce has led to the southbound flow of online dollars. The Retail Council survey proves what has long been suspected. Canadians spent $688 million over the Net last year, with 63 per cent of that going to U.S. Web sites. It's not that Canadians were happy about cross-border cyber-shopping—most said they would have preferred to buy from domestic sites. "But Canadian retailers aren't out there," says IBM's Marcus.

Why the hesitation? Blame it on generally conservative executives who balk at the time and expense involved in opening an online store, and the lack of sizable and immediate profits. But the pace of change, driven by the falling costs of computing power and the rise in Internet use, is so rapid that waiting for the full picture to come into focus may not be an option. "It's just a clear strategy for self-destruction," says Ford of Canada president Bobbie Gaunt, who wants all Ford dealers online by year-end and expresses concern that Canadian business leaders are being too slow to embrace the Net.



Peter Bregg/Maclean's

Consultant Pecaut: a quarter of Canadian retailers sell online

E-commerce would not be the first trend Canadian retailers have missed, the Retail Council study notes, citing such issues as Sunday shopping, big-box chains and catalogue shopping. Missing out again could mean more retail debacles like Eaton's. "This should be a wake-up call for Canadian retailers," says Marcus.

Far more Canadians use the Internet, of course, than ever go shopping on it—only 12 per cent of users made a Web purchase last year. A key issue in holding people back is a fear that credit-card transactions are insecure: 97 per cent of U.S. consumers in a 1998 Ernst & Young study said they weren't buying online because of security concerns. Canadian studies have made similar findings. But as cyber-shoppers get used to the process, fear recedes. Chuck Wilson, vice-president of e-commerce at the Royal Bank of Canada, says consumers should have no worries as long as they are shopping in the secure Web environment now offered by virtually all commerce sites. It is merchants who bear the real security risks—they have no way of knowing whether cardholders are legitimate. The credit-card industry is getting close to a programming solution, but for the moment banks treat a Web purchase as a "moto"—a mail-order, telephone order—where the business bears the risk if the card has been stolen.



Peter Bregg/Maclean's

Ford's Gaunt: she wants all her dealers online by year's end

Consumer activity on the Web is the most visible part of the electronic commerce juggernaut, but is overshadowed by what businesses are doing with each other as suppliers and buyers. Last year, business-to-business sales generated an impressive $4.6 billion in online sales, up from $1.5 billion the previous year. The federal government is gradually moving its procurement online with a Web site called Merx, which is now handling another $8 billion to $10 billion a year in sales that are not included in the Retail Council estimates. About 35,000 companies use the system, operated by Toronto-based Cebra Inc., to bid on government work.

As in every gold rush, some trails offer more glitter than gilt. Boston Consulting's Pecaut says when people look ahead to the next few years, they overestimate the changes that e-commerce will bring. But looking a decade ahead, he says, they underestimate the transformation—because it is hard to conceive of change that profound. This is, he says, like the dawn of the automobile age. Few in 1899 could have looked at a car and predicted suburbs. All we know now is that the future is coming faster than we can imagine. m

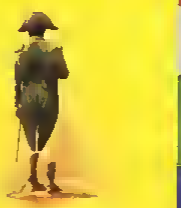


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Shopping at the cyberspace mall

From CDs to appliances, online vendors offer it all

Sam Sniderman, better known as Sam the Record Man, is pumped. As he holds court in his absolutely uncool Toronto office—with carpet up one wall and two paper Rolodexes on his desk—what has Sam's attention at age 79 is the Internet. This is a guy who remembers not just vinyl but the 78s that he sold out of his brother Sid's radio store. When his store expanded and moved downtown to Yonge Street, Sam says out-of-towners would come in and look at his stock—now about 500,000 titles—and tell him they wished there was a store like his where they lived. "We're going to be able to do that," he says of his new Internet location. "People who wanted to clone Sam the Record Man in their city can now clone it in their house."

The newly launched cyberspace version of Sam's (*www.samscd.com*) now offers about 200,000 music titles. It joins a growing list of other Canadian retailers who are making the shift to Internet commerce, offering everything from books to groceries to refrigerators. They are bewitched by forecasts that $80 billion worth of business will be transacted in Canada on the Net by 2003. And they are frightened by the come-from-nowhere success of U.S.-based companies such as bookseller Amazon.com, which has gone from $22 million in sales in 1996 to $892 million last year, and now sells far more than just books, including CDs and electronics. As they confront the fact that Internet commerce is not a fad, companies are "waking up and they're quite worried," says David Pecaut, head of the global electronic-commerce practice at Boston Consulting Group's Toronto office.

Companies that have established brand names on the Web have a huge advantage. Amazon.com is successfully fending off larger rivals who have arrived later to the Net. Experts warn that with change coming at the warp speed of the Internet (seven years ago, the World Wide Web didn't exist), merchants adapting to electronic commerce have no time to waste. "Traditional retailers can be very successful," Pecaut says. "But they need to move quickly."

Nowhere are the changes more evident than in the music industry, where the product is already in digital form. Retailers, artists and the big recording labels are all being swept up in the transformation. From his experience, Sam knows that a winning formula doesn't last forever. When he started in the business, Promenade Music was the market leader in Toronto, but "they couldn't see the change from 78s to micro-groove long-play" (albums or LPs). When he moved his store to Yonge Street in 1961, A&A Records was the market leader. Sam's (the firm still bears the quaint name Sniderman Radio Sales and Service Ltd.) later had its turn at the top before being displaced by British giant HMV Media Group. The shift to Internet commerce is one change he hopes he has seen in time.

Sam and son Jason, who runs the Web site, insist they have some strengths in the coming battle with established U.S. players like CDnow Inc. and Amazon. The big advantages any Canadian retailer enjoy are that prices are set in Canadian dollars and there are no customs duties. But companies such as Sam's also bring an entrenched brand name and a reputation. "I'm hopeful that will be the magic," Sam says of the 62-year-old image.

His national chain of 65 stores and the Web site will promote each other. Web customers will be able to search Sam's database, which will eventually include every one of the half-million titles in the flagship Yonge Street store. "The store is a wonderful resource," says Jason, "but it's sometimes a challenge to find what you want." In time, terminals displaying the Web site may be added to the stores so shoppers can do their own searches.



Peter Bregg/Maclean's

Sam and Jason Sniderman at Toronto store: learning to sell online after 62 years of business

While Sam's launched its Web site in early April, some artists were already in place. Toronto musician Jane Siberry has had her site for three years. Siberry's Sheeba Records site (*www.sheeba.ca*) allows fans to buy her CDs and place advance orders for new releases. But in an early portent of the potential revolution in music retailing, Siberry has imminent plans to allow consumers to download high-quality music off the Web, eliminating the manufacturer and the middleman. While her company handles some sales through stores and mail order, the Internet "is my main outlet," she says, although declining to say how much music she has sold at the site.

Siberry once had a lucrative contract with Warner Bros. Records, but left to go independent in a tussle over artistic freedom. Similarly, the latest album by the Toronto-based Cowboy Junkies, *Rarities, B-Sides and Slow, Sad Waltzes*, is available only online (at Amazon.com) and at their live performances. For years, musicians have hawked independently produced CDs from the stage, but the Internet promises to make independence more profitable. With a format known as MP3, music that is near-CD quality can be quickly downloaded and played on computers and portable players or burned onto a personal CD. Artists such as Siberry, Prince and rapper Chuck D of Public Enemy are hoping the Net will allow them to make music and money. "What it creates is so positive on so many levels," says Siberry. "There's such a direct connection between the fans and the artist."

The music industry, dominated by giant players like Seagram Co. Ltd.'s Universal Music Group, clearly hopes to outflank the Web start-ups. The industry detests the MP3 format because it can be freely copied and distributed across the Internet. Record companies are pushing for a standard format that will foil use without payment. But Sony Music Entertainment and Universal have jumped the gun on plans for a common format: each has announced its own plans for selling music over the Net.

Whether or not artists ever wrest control from the corporate giants, MP3 or other formats may spell the end of mass-produced music. Sam's online store may have downloadable libraries available late this year that will allow customers to put together their own CDs, with the music they like, in the order they want.

While Sam Sniderman challenges Amazon in music retailing, Larry Stevenson, president of Chapters Inc. (*www.chapters.ca*), is waging a similar battle in books against that same U.S. gorilla of e-commerce. Stevenson believes that he, too, has an edge or two on Amazon. Chapters rang up $578 million in total sales last year—with just an undisclosed fraction from the Internet. With 59 stores, the Chapters brand is well-known and that helps to draw Web site traffic. Electronic kiosks linked to the site are being rolled out in the stores, while banners unfurl the message that Chapters is open for cyber-shopping. Stevenson is also banking on Canadians and Americans having different reading tastes.

The Net is going to become an important way to sell books, with Stevenson expecting that Web sales could capture as much as 15 per cent of sales in four to five years. But even such partisans of electronic commerce do not believe that bookstores will soon become historical relics. "The Internet is going to be very large, but it won't replace stores," he says. "A large number of people who enjoy books love bookstores."

It's one thing for books and music to become staples of electronic commerce, but refrigerators? Paul Walters, chairman of Sears Canada Inc. (*www.sears.ca*), says he can use Internet sales to push Sears' market share in the appliance category to 50 per cent from its current 33 per cent. The company's stores and agents are as close to ubiquitous as is possible in the real world with 109 department stores and 1,932 catalogue pickup locations. But Sears on the Web can be anywhere there is a line and a computer. So this year, the Web site will begin offering more than 2,000 different models of major appliances, in addition to what is now a limited selection of general merchandise. The Sears site now offers fewer than 10 per cent of the products found in its stores. While appliances may seem a bit bulky to be sold over the Net, consumers typically absorb a lot of information before buying. "It's a category that is information-dependent," says Walters—and making sense of mountains of data is one thing the Web does well.

Some retailers worry their Internet sites will steal business from existing operations, depreciating their huge investments in real estate. Walters has no such fear. Sears is already a big player in catalogue sales, with all the logistics in place: its own trucking company, widespread locations to pick up goods, processes to handle not just orders but returns—30 per



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Direct sales on the Internet please artists—and may spell the end of mass-produced music

cent of merchandise ordered by catalogue gets sent back. Books and music were the easy part of Internet commerce, says Walters. "It's another thing to move a refrigerator."

Many Web retailers are not yet making money, their eyes trained on future growth, not present profits. Walters believes that with his operations already in place, the Internet can quickly lead to profits. The cost of handling a catalogue sale by phone is $11, but Walters estimates the Web can shave $2 off that. "In electronic sales, the customer does the work of the sales associate."

If books and music are the staples of Web commerce, others salivate at the prospect of what can be done with groceries. So far, several services exist in the United States, although none makes money and none attracts the kinds of sales numbers that make future profits a possibility. In Canada, the one major supermarket chain now experimenting with Web sales is Sobeys Quebec Inc. The Cybermarket (*www.iga.net*), created in 1996 and available only to Quebec residents, allows placement of an order with an individual store over the Web. The system only handles about 120 orders a week and groceries can be picked up or delivered. The problem so far is time: it takes about 45 minutes for the average person to shop in person and about 40 minutes at Sobeys' site for a first order, says company president Pierre Croteau. To reduce order time, Sobeys is running a test with 20 people using a so-called CyberPen, a handheld, wireless scanner that customers stroke across bar codes on used cans and other goods to build a shopping list. So far, says Croteau, online grocery shopping "is something for the future."

But the future of online retail is what mesmerizes everyone. Online sales in 1998 in the United States—which is showing the way in e-commerce—accounted for about one per cent of retail revenues, according to a study by the Ernst & Young consulting company. That will grow to nine per cent by 2001 and it is anyone's guess what the estimates are beyond that. "The current revenue is not the issue," says Walters at Sears. "It's where it's going." Sam Sniderman cannot conceal his enthusiasm. "I just can't wait." This, after all, is a man who has previously learned how to spin vinyl into gold.

A clever eye to the future

So what's down the road as electronic commerce takes hold? Experts offer these glimpses:

Clever Cars: Onboard computers with wireless Internet connections will be able to book a service appointment at a dealership and place an order for a part—without human assistance. In the event of a breakdown, the computer will be able to notify a tow truck.

Clever ABMs: Customers could be greeted with messages on a screen asking if they want to take out the same amount they withdrew the day before, or warned that an account is near its overdraft limit.

Co-operative agents: The NCR Knowledge Lab in England is developing agents—small computer programs that may be sent off to work on the Internet. An agent could search the Net for the best price on a Ford minivan. NCR's agent is also smart enough that if it finds similar programs looking for the same minivan, it could team up with them to arrange a bulk purchase deal. Some primitive software is already at work. Sites like Amazon.com use agents to recommend books to buyers based on previous purchases.

Banking on a naked need for money

The Web lets investors do business anytime

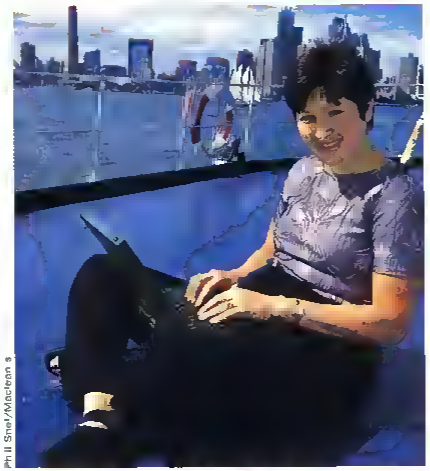
When people say it really isn't about money, *it's* about money. But when Brian Donovan closed his account at TD Bank's Green Line discount brokerage and moved his stock portfolio over to E*Trade Canada, it was about service and the convenience of online trading. Although Green Line Investor Services also offers trading over the Web, he preferred the range of research services at E*Trade. "Everything is right there," he says. Donovan, a Halifax sales representative, is no computer nerd—but he has happily climbed on the bandwagon of electronic finance, not just for his investments but for banking as well. "I can bank naked," he says.

The attraction of banking in the buff is growing as Canadians make the easy leap from a predilection for automated tellers and debit cards to the Internet. More than 1.6 million customers now have online banking access with the Big Five banks, by the end of 1998, about 200,000 online trading accounts had been set up, according to estimates from E*Trade prepared by U.S.-based Forrester Research Inc. E*Trade (*www.canada.etrade.com*) now has more than 11,000 accounts, up about 140 per cent from a year earlier. "There's been a dramatic shift to the Web in terms of banking and brokerage," notes Chuck Wilson, vice-president of e-commerce at the Royal Bank of Canada (*www.royalbank.com*).

But the Internet will do more than make it possible to bank and trade stocks at any time of the day or night. An increasing array of financial services will be available on the Web, including what may be The Next Big Thing—using the Internet instead of the mail to send out bills.

With people doing more of their routine banking by phone and on the Net, bank officials say they will be able to give more personal service to customers dealing with complex transactions. In the future, account managers plan to make a habit of visiting people applying for mortgages. Experts say brokers and bank branches will not disappear. "People still want face-to-face contact," says Wilson. But the Internet will likely change the way customers pay for services. Brokers may begin to charge for their advice instead of taking commissions on stock trades. Bank clients who insist on dealing with humans for routine transactions that could be handled more cheaply on the Internet could pay increasingly higher service charges. "Personal contact will be there," says Ross McKay, vice-president of business banking services at the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce (*www.cibc.com*). "We may price it differently in the future."

Canadian retailers may be slow to embrace Internet commerce, but observers say Canada's big banks, which dominate both banking and the brokerage industries, have moved aggressively to give themselves post position in what many are calling the New Economy. "In the United States, it's the retail industry that is driving e-commerce," says Wilson. "In Canada, it's the banks and the telcos [telephone companies]."



Phil Snel/Maclean's

*Colleen Moorehead of E*Trade: orders round-the-clock*

In the old world, customers did their business when it was convenient for their bankers and brokers. In the new world of e-commerce, people do what they want to do when they want to do it. Donovan likes to go over his portfolio in the evening, doing his research using a variety of online sources that offer information once available only to brokers. "I control my destiny seven days a week," he told *Maclean's*. E*Trade Canada president Colleen Moorehead says there are many like him. "There isn't an hour during the 24-hour cycle that we do not receive e-mails or orders." Bank officials say their systems are likewise busy at all hours.

While Canadians have had a few years to get used to online banking and stock trading, plans to start sending bills over the Internet may catch them by surprise. Two competing plans—one from a consortium called e-route Inc. and the other led by Canada Post—are well-advanced, with pilot programs set for this year and full-scale operations planned to start next year. Consumers will be able to choose whether they want to receive bills over the Internet or by mail. With e-route's system, customers logging onto a bank's site would see an alert that a bill has arrived. They could then schedule when to pay it.

As ever more financial services migrate online, cash could soon become about the only tangible left. Naturally, of course, the digital designers are working on eliminating that, too.

The media's new messengers

Web start-ups grow—without content or profits

The setting would be more at home in an Elmore Leonard novel than a script for corporate success. The smell of stale beer and cigarettes lingers in a near-deserted Toronto bar; a guy wearing a light suit and a dark shirt runs an ancient freight elevator that rises to a roofrop meeting. The occasion, an appearance by Jeff Mallett, the Canadian-born president of Yahoo! Inc., who is in town to launch several new products on his company's Canadian Web site (*www.ca.yahoo.com*). Mallett wears an open-necked shirt, his sports jacket slung over the back of a barstool. This is California casual, Silicon Valley-style. But what makes people pay attention is the phenomenal success of Yahoo! (the exclamation point is part of the name) and Mallett's stark assertion: "We are now building the pre-eminent 21st-century media company."

That's quite a goal for a company that didn't exist six years ago and operates only on the Web. Yahoo! went public in 1996 and now carries a stock market valuation in the range of such giants as CBS Corp. It easily outdistances icons of the media industry such as the New York Times Co. and the Washington Post Co. The company, which was founded by two graduate students, now has operations in 19 countries.

What separates Yahoo! from traditional media companies is that it does not create content—in fact it takes pride in not doing so. News comes from the Reuters and Associated Press wire services; financial information and sports from a variety of sources. And there is content that only a Web site could love: personalized home pages, free e-mail, messaging software so users can tell when friends are online, telephone directories and maps. "We're not in the content-creation business," says Mallett. "We're in the distribution business."

In its desire to leave the storytelling to others, Yahoo! is not alone. Canada's most popular Web site, Sympatico (*www.sympatico.ca*), is run by a Toronto company called MediaLinx Interactive LP. "We don't see ourselves as content providers," says MediaLinx CEO Shaun Purdue. "We're an aggregator." That's the Web term for those who take content, whether news or telephone and movie listings, and assemble it so users can easily find what they are seeking.

In the world of the Internet, the job of bringing informational order out of informational chaos may prove—as Mallett clearly hopes—to be the thing that separates the successful media companies from the also-rans. Michael O'Neil, Canadian manager for International Data Corp., a U.S.-based high-tech research and consulting firm, notes the world is now flooded with far more information than any human could digest in a lifetime. Helping people to make sense of infinite amounts of information has become, he says, "an act of creation."

Sympatico's place in Internet publishing is also noteworthy because of its parentage. MediaLinx is not owned by one of Canada's big media companies, but by the phone company; Purdue's last job was as chief operating officer of Bell. The company also owns a substantial minority interest in Canoe (*www.canoe.ca*), the country's second-largest Web site, whose principal owner is the newspaper publisher Quebecor Inc.

Why is the phone company now in the media business? Bell thinks strong Canadian Web sites will persuade people to buy Internet access, part of Bell's core business. If Bell is unable to establish a strong presence on the Web, says Purdue, it risks being pushed aside in the fight to retain a direct relationship with its customers. In the geek language of e-business, it's called "disintermediation." In plainer terms, "we'll be marginalized," Purdue says.

That is just one example of the blurring of business boundaries. Another is the Quicken Canada Web site (*www.quicken.ca*), run by the new media division of Rogers Media Inc. (which owns *Maclean's*). Quicken, which offers a wide range of financial information, is a partnership between Rogers and Intuit Canada Ltd., which produces financial management software. In the United States, The Hearst Corp., a publishing giant, has joined forces with Whirlpool Corp. to sell appliances on the Net through a soon-to-be-launched site called brandwise.com. What Hearst brings to the partnership is its long-established Good Housekeeping brand name.



Phil Snel/Maclean's

MediaLinx CEO Purdue: the most popular site

But is anyone making money? Bell hopes that MediaLinx and Canoe will eventually turn profits. And Yahoo! is already in the black. "We have to think that profits matter," says Mallett. For a company that aspires to be the Disney or Time Warner of the Web, it can hardly believe otherwise.

A road more travelled

Agencies must adapt as online trip bookings grow

Bailey's Travel Ltd. is a long walk from being one of the world's big companies. Based in Dartmouth, N.S., it employs a staff of four, and after 12 years in business, earns annual revenues of less than $3 million. Bailey's is used to competing with giant firms like American Express Travel and Carlson Wagonlit Travel, but now it must confront a different breed of mammoth competition: Microsoft Corp.

These days, the software giant from Redmond, Wash., is very much a part of the industry, having launched its Expedia travel Web site (*www.expedia.msn.ca*) three years ago. Expedia now sells more than 5,000 airline tickets a day, more than Bailey's sells in five months. Travel is not the only industry that Microsoft has successfully invaded as the advent of electronic commerce begins to blur the boundaries that traditionally divided companies into distinct sectors. The company also has Web sites selling cars and offering financial information.

In Canada, online ticket sales have been slower to take off than in the United States, where about four per cent of tickets are now purchased on the Web. But Peter Vezina, Bailey's manager, says the trend is too powerful to ignore. "So far, we haven't noticed a big impact, but it's inevitable. In a few years, we're going to be going 50-50 with the big guys."



Travel agent Vezina (foreground): he offers ticket delivery to clients

Expedia is definitely among the big guys, racking up more than $750 million in travel sales a year. Despite that, John Pollard, Expedia's international group manager at Microsoft headquarters, is quick to provide a reality check that proves e-commerce is still in its infancy. Against total U.S. industry revenues of about $150 billion a year, "we're tiny," he says.

The big travel sites, such as the Canadian version of Travelocity (*www.travelocity.ca*), owned by the Texas-based Sabre Group Holdings Inc., all offer similar services. They allow you to research travel destinations, as well as check—and reserve—airline tickets, car rentals and hotel rooms. They keep track of frequent-flyer memberships and provide deals on such leisure travel items as cruises and resort packages. In short, they do pretty much everything that a travel agent would do. For Pollard, that's no surprise: "Expedia *is* a travel agent."

Expedia and other online competitors use the full throttle of computer power to their advantage. Keeping track of every airline that flies a particular route, and of the different prices, is something that computers—and by extension, the Internet—do well. Travel agents have done this for years, using their own systems to sort options for their clients. So, says Pollard, Microsoft's entry is not as peculiar as it might appear. "There's a huge amount of information to wade through—that's a great software problem."

Online services have another advantage over traditional competitors. All travel agents have seen their profit margins cut in recent years as airlines have trimmed and set caps on agency commissions. Online services have suffered the same fate, but they also draw revenue from advertising and from fees for providing car-rental firms and hotels with a prominent place on Web pages. Pollard is loath to give figures, but says Expedia earns millions of dollars a year in advertising revenue.

Expedia's bread and butter is travel on heavily used routes. "That's where the major market is," he says. But pile complexity on complexity and travel agents have the edge. The online sites, for example, cannot easily allow someone to book two legs of a trip in economy and another in business class. "There's still a lot of stuff out there," admits Pollard, "that takes the artificial intelligence of humans."

Along with cuts to commission, competition from the Web has become yet another cross to bear. But travel industry executives still believe agents can compete. One answer is with their own Web sites—or maybe the best way to stay in the game is through exceptional service. "I deliver my tickets personally to my clients' homes," says Vezina. That's something no Web site can ever do.

With John DeMont in Halifax

The deal of the next century

Sales on the Web could soon lead to custom-ordered cars

Dale Arthur, a retired Edmonton businessman, is the proud new owner of a 1999 Chevy Silverado two-tone truck—white with pewter accents. He and his wife, Gloria, have long wanted to travel, and needed something that could pull a large trailer. He got a good price on the Silverado, and the options he wanted, including a bigger engine—without spending hours traipsing to dealer showrooms. Instead, he bought his truck over the Internet.

Car and truck sales on the Net are just starting to rev up. Last year in the United States (Canadian data is not available), about 800,000 new cars, worth $28 billion, were sold through online sites. That number is expected to reach 5.2 million cars and $200 billion in sales by 2003, according to a study by U.S.-based Forrester Research. As the change takes hold, the entire industry—from manufacturer to local car dealer—will be turned upside down. Bobbie Gaunt, president of Ford of Canada and an ardent believer that the Web is not just a passing fancy, says companies will have to redo the way they do business. If not, she warns, "you are not even going to survive."

Arthur bought his truck through a service known as Autobytel.ca Inc. (www.autobytel.ca), one of several car-purchase sites. People use the site to research their purchase, get reviews and information on prices, safety issues, fuel economy, and options. When a user decides to buy, California-based Autobytel passes the customer referral to a dealer in its network—in Canada, this includes about 150 new-car dealers in every province except Newfoundland.

Arthur knew he wanted a Silverado. After making his selection online—a process that took about 30 minutes—Autobytel sent his request to Don Wheaton Chevrolet Oldsmobile in Edmonton. Bryan Jewell, the dealer's Internet sales manager, called and offered a set price of $39,900. That was the best price Arthur found: he was glad to avoid negotiating because, like many people, he hates to haggle. Services like Autobytel offer prices that can only be beaten by aggressive shopping and bargaining. After a few more phone calls and some e-mail, Arthur's deal was done.

Microsoft's CarPoint site takes the service a few steps further. (While it is run by Brantford, Ont., native Lindsay Sparks, a network of Canadian dealers will not be established until next year.) CarPoint's databases list the available options for each vehicle. The site also provides a video, so a customer may look over the inside and outside of the vehicle. But like Autobytel, purchases are handled through affiliated dealers—2,700 of them in the United States.

About five per cent of U.S. cars are now being sold through the Internet, but many car dealers remain skeptical that this poses a threat. Rick Gauthier, president of the Canadian Automobile Dealers Association, points to the fact that Autobytel and CarPoint still refer customers to dealers. "At the end of the day," says Gauthier, "the customer still needs to go into the dealer and touch the car."

But even that appears to be changing, and fast. In mid-May, the newest of what may be a new breed of Internet car sites set up shop on the Web. At CarsDirect.com, based in California, the entire transaction is completed without the buyer ever contacting a dealer. "We take it a step further," CEO Scott Painter told *Maclean's*. The service, which will be available in Canada by year's end, can even deliver the car to the buyer's home or office. CarsDirect, which gets its auto inventory through brokers and dealers, also handles financing.

Some customers will always want to take a test drive. But Painter and CarPoint's Sparks say, increasingly, new-car buyers feel less need to touch the upholstery and check under the hood. Because the Internet sites offer so much data, Sparks says online customers visit an average of 1.2 dealers before buying, compared with between three and five for off-line sales. Boston Consulting Group estimates one-quarter of car purchases are now researched on the Internet.



Online buyer Arthur: less work, no haggles

The volume of auto sales on the Web already shows promise. At Don Wheaton, Jewell has sold 60 or 70 cars over the Net in the past seven months, a sales rate he calls about average for the business. At CarPoint, Sparks says the service generated about 130,000 U.S. sales leads a month in the last three months of 1998. 20 per cent of them lead to purchases.

The real revolution could come when a Web surfer can order his or her car or truck online and made to order, as Dell now does with computers. Ford employees in the United States already use the company's internal Internet to order cars off the assembly line. The public could begin to custom-order cars in "months to maybe a year," Gaunt says. It now takes between 20 and 70 days to manufacture and deliver a vehicle. Ford's goal: 10 days.

Perhaps sooner than they realize, many buyers will be clicking, rather than kicking new tires. m

Minister of Human Resources Development
Ministre du Développement des ressources humaines
Ottawa Canada K1A 0J9



Minister's Message

Canadians with disabilities want to take an active part in their communities, their society and their economy They want to share in the impressive job growth that Canada has earned over the past five years. They deserve to be equal citizens in every sense of those words

The Government of Canada understands and supports those goals We know that success in today's global economy goes to countries that draw best on the talents and drive of all their citizens. We know that opening doors to full participation is a shared commitment across Canada. It reflects "an ethic of care" – a belief that the public, private and voluntary sectors all have roles in building a society that enables its citizens both to flourish and to help create a stronger economy

Our government's contribution to those outcomes includes close cooperation with the provinces and territories on disability issues. Governments in Canada are moving to a coordinated vision and have already taken shared action. That work demonstrates a commitment to cooperation and results It shows the benefits of our efforts to strengthen Canada's social union.

Canada can do even more, but our achievements show how much Canadians can do when they work together for a common cause.

Pierre S. Pettigrew

Canada

Opening Doors of Opportunity:

Canadians with Disabilities eager to access the workforce

Opening doors to opportunity will eliminate barriers to exploration and creativity

Increasingly, Canadians with disabilities are opening those doors and, in the process are working and living to their full potential

People with disabilities are our neighbors, friends and family members We all know someone who has a disability related to mobility, vision or hearing, or a learning, mental health or intellectual disability

Today, we know that our entire society benefits when all Canadians are included and can participate equally in the world of work and opportunity

Canadians believe in fairness and value the full participation of all people in our society These values and beliefs are entrenched in our Charter of Rights and Freedoms

Yet, believing in the principles of fairness and entrenching these in the law is only a part of the solution for ensuring that Canadians with disabilities can fully participate in Canadian society

More than 4 million Canadians have a disability.

Almost half are of working age 15 to 64.

Yet only 44% are in the labour force (working or looking for work), compared to 70% of the general population.

For more information on Government of Canada programs and services, call 1-800-665-9017, TTY 1-800-561-9706

The Government of Canada and its partners working together

The Government of Canada is committed to achieving greater inclusion of people with disabilities in the country's social and economic life The impact of that commitment includes a more equitable workforce, stronger communities and a more vibrant Canada

Recognizing the added cost and the additional barriers faced by persons with disabilities, the Government of Canada has established

- tax credits worth $635 million per year to help defray financial costs associated with disability,
- special education grants to make post-secondary education more affordable for students with disabilities and
- the Canada Pension Plan Vocational Rehabilitation Program to help CPP beneficiaries who want to return to work

However, governments are unable to remove all barriers It requires all sectors working together — the provinces and territories, private sector, organizations of persons with disabilities and the public

For example, we have been working with the provincial governments to produce *In Unison* This outlines our collective vision of a unified approach to programs and services for Canadians with disabilities And we have negotiated with the provinces to deliver the Employability Assistance for Persons with Disabilities initiative

We are also working with the disability community to identify issues of concern and develop solutions For example, we created the Opportunities Fund, in conjunction with disability groups, non-governmental organizations and the private sector, to help Canadians with disabilities prepare for and secure jobs



Yves Turgeon, Drummondville Quebec s one of 8,500 people with disabilities who have gained work experience through the Opportunities Fund "Before this, I was on Employment Insurance It certainly gives me more independence this way It s the discovery of a very different world "



Shelley Nicholson of Ponoka Alberta earned a social work diploma and became a social work assistant at Alberta Hospital after battling cancer that left her unable to work "It was important to move on Because of the Canada Pension Plan Vocational Rehabilitation Program I was able to pursue a world of options instead of limitations "

Calling All Canadians

But more than new programs and initiatives are required

Many Canadians with disabilities point out that attitudes and assumptions – not their disability – are the biggest barriers they face By making simple adaptations to workplaces and the community and by accessing today's wealth of technological solutions, people with disabilities can participate like everybody else

Some adaptations could include installing ramps or electronic door openers providing sign language interpreters or information in alternate formats such as large print or Braille

Changing perceptions and attitudes is half the battle Canadians are increasingly recognizing the abilities, talents and skills that people with disabilities bring to the workforce Many employers have recognized that their inclusion makes "good business sense "

Communities and businesses have discovered the benefits of including people with disabilities as consumers of their goods and services

We can all play a role in creating an inclusive society and changing attitudes about people with disabilities

It can begin with something as simple as making a phone call to find out how to make your workplace and hiring practices more accessible to persons with disabilities It could also include drawing people with disabilities into community plans and projects for their views

Canadians are increasingly embracing the belief that people with disabilities should participate in our society and economy on equal terms

Furthermore, Canadians are realizing that they can play a role in creating a Canadian community that is socially just, economically strong, and proud of its diversity

Carving up the unfriendly skies



In search of a deal with Air Canada

The chief executive officer of financially troubled Canadian Airlines International Ltd. revealed his company held confidential negotiations with Air Canada to divvy up domestic and international routes in order to curb their fierce competition. Kevin Benson says he expects talks to resume this fall after the Calgary-based airline hopes to get new investors to inject more than $300 million into the company. Prior to Canadian's annual general meeting last week, rumours circulated suggesting executives had reached a deal with an unnamed wealthy white-knight investor—but if so, that was not announced. "The question is whether Canada can sustain vicious competition between its two flag-carrying airlines," said Benson. "The fact that neither of us has been able to match the [financial] performance of the major U.S. airlines in the past 10 years should indicate to both of us that other options ought to be considered."

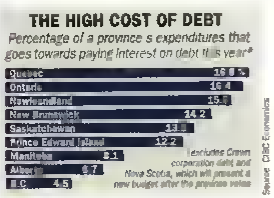
Transportation Minister David Collenette gave a cool response to Benson's remarks. "Competition means you compete," Collenette said. "You do not collude." The carrier lost $149.7 million in the fourth quarter of 1998 and $107.8 million in the first quarter of this year.

The felling of a lumber company

A week after Weyerhaeuser Co. of Federal Way, Wash., unveiled its $3.6-billion acquisition of Vancouver-based MacMillan Bloedel Ltd., lumber giant Louisiana-Pacific Corp. of Portland, Ore., is buying Quebec's Group Forex Inc. for $600 million. Louisiana-Pacific, which, like Forex, is a leading producer of oriented strandboard, a popular plywood substitute, is continuing with Forex's plans to build a plant on Quebec's North Shore. Forex had reached an agreement with the Quebec government on an assured supply of timber for the plant.

Financial outlook

The provinces have come a long way in improving their finances, with six of 10 balancing their books or running a surplus this year, the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce reported. (Nova Scotia, which is having an election, is not included.) Total provincial deficits will drop to $2.3 billion this year, one-tenth of what they were in the early 1990s, and down from $2.6 billion last year. However, notes CIBC chief economist Josh Mendelsohn, they still owe an estimated $317 billion—or nearly $11,000 for each Canadian. But CIBC economist Linda Nazareth says the overall mood "is relief that the worst is over and spending can begin. No province expects a recession soon and several are looking for years of good times."



A neutral bias

The U.S. Federal Reserve Board said it will raise its key lending rate to five per cent, up from 4.75 per cent. The reserve increased the rate it charges banks to cool the red-hot U.S. economy and tame inflation. Unexpectedly, the reserve said it was adopting a neutral stance on the future course of interest rates, making hikes in the short run less likely. The Bank of Canada was not expected to match the latest increase.

Trading places

Rogue trader Nick Leeson, who brought Britain's Barings Bank to its knees with his money-losing bets on financial markets, was freed from a Singapore prison. Leeson's derivatives deals in Singapore left Barings with $1.4 billion of debt. He was jailed in 1995. On the eve of his release, his lawyer dismissed reports that Leeson, 32, has a fortune hidden in Britain.

Bottoms up at Molson

Aiming to improve its bottom line, Molson Inc. may close one of eight breweries, and will cut annual costs by between $80 million and $120 million, CEO James Arnett said. Targets include Molson's sports and entertainment business—including the Montreal Canadiens and Molson Centre—which lost $3.8 million last year.

A conditional OK

The Quebec Securities Commission approved the restructuring of Canada's stock exchanges on condition the commission maintains a regulatory role. Finance Minister Bernard Landry is expected to rule by this fall on the change, by which Montreal's exchange would trade derivatives only.

No more McUnion

Employees at North America's only unionized McDonald's restaurant voted last week for decertification. The Canadian Auto Workers had represented the workers at the Squamish, B.C., outlet since last August. The CAW attributed the defeat to employee turnover and to the fact that McDonald's had responded to employees' concerns.



Ross Laver

Tough as nails

When Annette Verschuren moved into the CEO's office at Home Depot Canada three years ago, critics complained that she didn't have much of a track record in retail. They were right, but the ever-resourceful Cape Bretoner had something else that turned out to be just as valuable: the experience she gained during nine years at Cape Breton Development Corp., a now-moribund Crown corporation that wasted nearly $2 billion in an unsuccessful effort to salvage the region's money-losing coal industry.

The connection between a failed government make-work project and a highly successful chain of home-improvement stores might not be apparent to most people. But in Verschuren's mind, the link is obvious. "One of the really valuable things I learned at Cape Breton Development Corp. was how *not* to run a business," she says. "I learned that you've got to make tough decisions, and that when you make those decisions up front it's a lot less painful than letting mistakes drag on for many years."



Verschuren: a warning for competitors

Verschuren, 43, certainly hasn't made many mistakes in her current position. When she joined Home Depot three years ago, the company was Canada's third-largest home-improvement retailer, measured by sales. Now, it's the undisputed leader in the category, with 43 warehouse-style stores in Ontario and the four western provinces, and 11 more due to open by December. Next year, the company plans to build an additional 13 to 15 outlets, including three in the Montreal area and one each in Halifax, Dartmouth, N.S., and Moncton, N.B. If everything unfolds as planned, the company's payroll should hit 16,000 by the end of 2000, compared with about 12,000 now.

Those numbers make Home Depot the fastest-growing major retailer in Canada, ahead of Chapters. "Our plan is to expand by at least 25 per cent a year," says Verschuren, who left Nova Scotia in 1989 and now lives in Toronto. The expansion drive is an ambitious, and costly, undertaking. "We purchase a lot of our own real estate, instead of leasing land the way many other retailers do, so putting up a store can run anywhere from $12 million to $16 million. But we truly want to become a national company, so this is just the beginning. We obviously need to make a major investment in Quebec, which is a market of almost eight million people."

The push into Quebec is clearly the top item on Verschuren's agenda these days. It's also a source of controversy, given that five years ago Home Depot signed a non-competition pact with Réno-Depot Inc., a Montreal-based building-supplies chain that now has nine warehouse stores and annual sales of $600 million. The agreement, drawn up when Home Depot entered Canada by buying 75 per cent of the Aikenhead's home-improvement chain, stipulated that Home Depot would stay out of Quebec, and Réno-Depot out of the rest of the country, until March, 2004. Home Depot's lawyers say the treaty was nullified last year when Réno-Depot's parent company was acquired by a British retail holding company, Kingfisher PLC.

Although Réno-Depot disputes that interpretation and is threatening legal action, Verschuren makes no excuses for her latest move. Nor is she inclined to apologize for Home Depot's American roots. Yes, its growing presence in Canada is making life difficult for some smaller Canadian-owned retailers. But that's only because Home Depot and other U.S. retail giants are more efficient than their Canadian competitors and offer better customer service, she says. "Let me tell you, Home Depot and Wal-Mart have been exceptional in keeping inflation down in this country. We have not taken price increases in our operations in Canada, and why should Canadians have to pay for somebody else's inefficiencies?" Besides, she adds, the smart competitors have already figured out what they need to do to survive. "If you look at our stores, you'll see all sorts of businesses opening up around them—carpet stores, paint stores and so on. And I don't blame them, because we're big traffic generators. Our stores average between 25,000 and 30,000 transactions per week. That's like the entire population of Sydney, N.S., going through one of our stores every seven days. No wonder companies like Canadian Tire want to be next to us."

Going up against Home Depot, however, is not for the lazy or faint of heart. One of Verschuren's other priorities this year is to increase the number of 24-hour stores from two (both in Toronto) to six or eight. She's well aware that some people object to round-the-clock commercialism, but their protests leave her unmoved. "I think the majority of consumers want this," she says flatly. "They're looking to get things at the right price, where they want it, when they want it and how they want it. And retailers that hold back and refuse to change are going to lose." She's talking about her own company, of course, but the words could also serve as a warning to thousands of Canadian retailers.

Singing the bullion blues

At about $260 (U.S.) an ounce, the price of gold is languishing at its lowest point in 20 years. So, not surprisingly, many people wonder whether now is a good time to buy. That depends, says Alastair McIntyre, a director of precious and base metals with trader ScotiaMocatta, a subsidiary of Scotiabank. McIntyre cautions that gold may sink to $250 (U.S.) an ounce. "Just because the market is at a 20-year low," says McIntyre, "does not imply it's going to go higher."



Several factors have driven down gold prices, including Asia's 1997 economic crisis and the sell-off of large amounts of gold reserves by various governments. Lately, the chief contributor has been Britain, which intends to sell almost 60 per cent of its reserves. Since that decision in May, gold has dropped more than $25 (U.S.) an ounce.

To long-term investors, however, gold remains attractive. This year, sales of gold bullion coins at the Royal Canadian Mint are expected to meet or exceed last year's figures. At Gatewest Coin Ltd. in Winnipeg, business is up 25 per cent—reflecting both the low price and fears that Y2K problems will disrupt markets, says company president Ian Laing. "I would never preach to people that they put all their life savings in gold," Laing says. "But it has its place."

Ethical banking

Consumers with a social conscience can now deposit their money where their heart is. Starting this month, the Citizens Bank is phasing in a new policy, becoming the first Canadian bank to pledge that it will never knowingly deal with firms that violate human rights, manufacture tobacco products, produce nuclear energy or mistreat animals. The policy also covers firms that cause "excessive environmental harm," build or trade military weapons, or have a poor record of employee relations. A subsidiary of the community-owned VanCity credit union in British Columbia, the virtual bank promises an independent audit to ensure compliance. "The fact they'll be open to an audit is excellent," says Jenny Hillard, vice-president of regional policy and issues for the Consumers' Association of Canada. "I applaud them."

Forecast: Mortgage Rates

Canada's Big Five banks raised their five-year, closed mortgage rates at least six times since April because of inflation fears in bond markets where they raise money. Last week, the rate stood at 7.7 per cent, up from about 6.8 per cent three months ago. Then, the U.S. Federal Reserve raised its key lending rate by 0.25 per cent, easing inflation fears. That led one Canadian bank to lower its five-year rate to 7.5 per cent—with others expected to follow. Still, shorter terms with lower rates save money, says Moshe Milevsky, a finance professor at Toronto's York University. "If you want long-term security," says Milevsky, "you're going to pay."

Money Talks

A prince of a frog

It has to be one of the more original book titles: *It's Your Frog . . . Warts and All.* In this case, the frog is a small business, to be loved whether "good, bad or ugly." Written by business adviser Douglas West of Mississauga, Ont., *It's Your Frog* offers common-sense advice on running a small firm, such as identifying the five biggest expenses—and chopping 20 per cent. That way, says West, the business might not croak.

An empty Net?

Kate Warne, the Canadian market strategist for St. Louis-based Edward Jones, advises potential investors to shun overvalued Internet stocks like Amazon.com. Better to invest in firms that build the electronic highway, like Nortel Networks. Using the Klondike Gold Rush as an analogy, Warne says: "If you were the one selling the picks and shovels to the miners, then you made the money. The miners might, or might not, have found the gold."

Making a statement

In its summer newsletter, Dalbar Inc., a financial services research firm in Boston and Toronto, ranked Canadian brokerages based on content and presentation of their client statements. While ranking Bank of Montreal InvestorLine as the best, Dalbar criticized the industry as a whole for its "almost bland approach to reporting account information." Dalbar says some U.S. brokerage statements feature easy-to-read graphics to illustrate asset allocation. A Bank of Montreal spokesman says: "If clients are looking for more of a graphic representation, they'll get it."

Best of the bunch

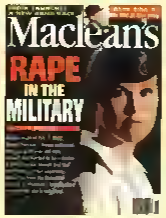
A research firm rated brokerage statements to clients for content and presentation. The top four:

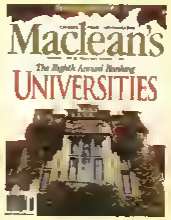
1. **Bank of Montreal InvestorLine**
2. **TD Green Line**
3. **Nesbitt Burns**
4. **TD Evergreen**

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Maclean's captures top media awards

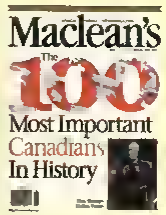












The National Magazine Awards: Maclean's won the prestigious **President's Medal** for best overall article, "Rape in the Military" by Senior Writer Jane O'Hara; the same package also won the **Gold Award** for investigative reporting; the eighth annual ranking of universities by Assistant Managing Editor Ann Dowsett Johnston and staff won the **Gold Award** for editorial package; **Honourable Mentions** went to "Hungarian Rhapsody" and "Cirque de Success" by Maclean's film critic Brian D. Johnson and to Maclean's Winter Olympics package, "Gold Rush" by Executive Editor Bob Levin, Sports and Life Editor James Deacon and their colleagues.

The Canadian Journalism Foundation's "Excellence in Journalism" Award: This annual award recognizes the outstanding work of a journalistic organization. Maclean's was selected for devoting major resources to covering important public issues and for maintaining an unflinching commitment to journalistic integrity.

The Michener Award Honourable Mention: Presented to Maclean's for a series investigating troubles in the Canadian military, the award focuses on the public benefit generated by media projects.

In fact, Maclean's award-winning cover stories are credited with bringing about sweeping changes in the Canadian Forces and having a profound impact on university campuses across Canada.

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An alternative to bypass surgery?

Critical doctors say chelation therapy is unproven

Gene Dopp talks glowingly about his doctor. "He is so gentle and devoted," says the 77-year-old resident of Orangeville, Ont. "Everybody just loves that man." So why is that doctor under investigation by the Ontario College of Physicians and Surgeons, the province's regulatory body? The college launched its review last August, seizing patient files from the doctor's office in a small community west of Orangeville. The physician does not want to be named because the investigation has not been closed, although no charges have been filed. One investigator told him the college received a complaint about a patient who died of a heart attack, he says. "But really," adds the soft-spoken physician, "at first they mostly asked about the chelation."

He is referring to a hugely controversial alternative therapy that he and only about 50 other practitioners offer in Canada. To its proponents, chelation therapy is a miraculous cure for clogged blood vessels. To its harshest detractors, it is sheer quackery. Whatever the truth, chelation therapy has moved to the forefront of the often heated battle between alternative therapists and conventional practitioners. It involves a series of intravenous infusions of a solution containing EDTA, a preservative commonly found in mayonnaise, soap and beer. Used medically since the 1950s to clear the blood of lead and other poisonous heavy metals, chelation is now touted as a treatment for coronary artery disease and other heart and blood-vessel ailments.

Proponents say EDTA improves circulation by taking calcium and other metallic elements and impurities from the blood stream and shrinking plaque buildup in arteries. Patients spend from $120 to $140 per session—not covered by provincial health plans or private insurers—and most receive at least 20 sessions. Although enthusiasts endorse chelation as an alternative to coronary bypass surgery, the medical establishment insists that, despite at least three clinical trials in New Zealand, Holland and Germany, there is no convincing evidence that it works. "As a research biochemist for 30 years, I tell you that it cannot work the way chelationists claim," says Saul Green of New York City, who specializes in analyzing research on alternative therapies.



Todd Korol for Maclean's

Soriano with patients: inroads in some provinces

If evidence for chelation is only anecdotal, the testimonies are legion and powerful. Harry Morstead, 74, suffered three heart attacks and two failed angioplasties—operations to expand blocked arteries—before trying chelation six years ago. "I couldn't walk two blocks without having to take nitroglycerine pills for the pain," says the retired Calgary construction industry consultant, now an avid skier again. "After five sessions, the pain went away." Such stories embolden chelation doctors to defy convention. "I was willing to become a waitress in Banff rather than stop doing chelation," says Dr. Jeanette Soriano, a Calgary general practitioner and the first doctor to openly perform the procedure in Alberta. She and five other doctors spent $300,000 in legal fees from 1993 to 1996 battling the college in Alberta for acceptance. "I was moved by my patients and I knew I wasn't doing anything wrong," says Soriano.

Recently, the medical establishment has made grudging concessions to what it calls a "complementary therapy." In Alberta, Saskatchewan, Nova Scotia and Newfoundland, MDs can register to provide chelation under provincial guidelines. The therapy is also available in British Columbia and Ontario, but with no specific guidelines in place. Still, doctors practising chelation complain that numerous investigations are still officially open, if not actively pursued. "On the one hand, the colleges say it's allowed, but on the other they let you know they are watching closely," says Dr. Fred Hui of Toronto, who offers a variety of traditional Chinese remedies as well as chelation.

In 1993, popular demand for chelation spurred a clinical trial involving 32 patients in New Zealand. "We didn't find anything to suggest it makes people better," says Dr. Andre van Rij of the University of Otago, head of the trial. Now, the first Canadian trial is under way at the Foothills Medical Centre in Calgary. "There's no doubt most people feel better after chelation," says Calgary cardiologist James Stone, a member of the trial's steering committee. "But then," he adds, referring to a now-debunked apricot-pit cancer treatment popular in the 1970s, "so did people taking laetrile." Placebo or effective treatment? The Calgary findings are due around the end of the year.

Susan Oh



Darlene Hildebrandt for Maclean's

O'Brien: bartending while he finishes his business degree

Millennium millions

Ottawa's new scholarship program edges closer to reality

It was Jean Chrétien's way of making peace with Canadian students. After years of slashing transfer payments to post-secondary education, the Prime Minister offered an olive branch in the fall of 1997, announcing the Millennium Scholarship Fund. Months later in the federal budget, Finance Minister Paul Martin unveiled the details: starting in early 2000, the $2.5-billion fund would provide $300 million in annual grants to post-secondary students, over a period of 10 years. But from the beginning, the response to the Millennium Fund was mixed. There were immediate concerns from the provinces, which argued that the federal government was infringing on their exclusive jurisdiction over education. Dismissing the fund as a poor substitute for lost transfer payments, Quebec insisted on complete control over the money. Meanwhile, students—burdened by rising tuition and soaring debt—were anxious to know whether the scholarships would be need- or merit-based.

Now, as the October application date for the first round of scholarships draws closer, some answers have begun to emerge. Since May, the Yukon and all other governments except Quebec, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island and the two remaining territories have signed individual deals with the Millennium Foundation. To cut bureaucracy, it will rely on the provinces to identify scholarship recipients and distribute the money. All the regions that have signed have agreed to distribute 95 per cent of the money to students with the greatest financial need, reserving five per cent for merit scholarships. By early 2000, as many as 100,000 students a year will receive an average grant of $3,000.

But the similarities end there. In crazy-quilt fashion, the foundation has agreed to tailor the fund to each province's approach to financial aid. Says Norman Riddell, the foundation's executive director: "It's not our business to tell the provinces what to do with their money."

The federal cash will free up millions of dollars that provincial governments already spend on financial aid, money that will be used to further benefit students. The foundation estimates that the surplus in Ontario will be more than $65 million, in Alberta, an estimated $15 million. Alberta will funnel some of those funds into a grant program to help students buy computers. British Columbia will extend its generous system of grants. And Saskatchewan will channel most of its $9-million surplus to its two universities, on the condition that tuition fees are not raised more than two per cent a year.

Quebec remains the biggest sticking point, refusing to negotiate with the foundation. University leaders are standing by the province's right to spend the money on education as it sees fit. Since Quebec students enjoy the lowest tuition in the country, academic officials argue that a significant portion of the fund should go directly to universities and colleges. Says Bernard Shapiro, principal and vice-chancellor of McGill in Montreal: "In a country as complicated as this, you have to think of the second- and third-order questions to see how it fits."

The scholarship program has drawn fire for other reasons. The fund is off limits for graduate students, part-timers and those in their first year of post-secondary. And the money will do nothing to help students like Trevor O'Brien. Struggling to complete his business degree at Saint Mary's University in Halifax, O'Brien has toiled in a host of part-time jobs, but still expects to graduate in December with a $32,000 debt. Even so, he applauds the new program. "Anything to do with a scholarship fund is fantastic." For thousands of students like Trevor O'Brien, mired in debt, a little assistance would certainly have been appreciated.

John Schofield



The Long March West

A historic re-enactment recalls how the North West Mounted Police chased out the whisky traders, and reinforced Canada's claim to the West

By Brian Bergman

Growing up in the small town of Hartney in the southwest corner of Manitoba, Grant Little believed that the Royal Canadian Mounted Police "hung the moon." Intrigued by the romantic history of the force, he always wanted to be a Mountie, and after graduating from the University of Manitoba 20 years ago, he eagerly joined up. These days, Little is leader of the RCMP's emergency response team in Edmonton and also serves in the force's drug-enforcement section. It's satisfying work, says Little, but also the sort of job that can leave a person rather jaded. "We don't really get to deal with the nicer people of the world," he observes dryly.

For the past two months, though, Little has been recapturing the spirit that drew him to the force in the first place. He is one of about 20 RCMP officers—at times joined by as many as 300 civilians—who have been riding on horseback across the Prairies to re-enact what is historically referred to as the Long March West by the original North West Mounted Police 125 years ago. That trek played a crucial role in asserting Canada's sovereignty over its western frontier and forging the nation that exists today. The re-enactment ride—which wrapped up the first major leg of its journey in Fort Macleod, Alta., last Saturday—garnered only intermittent national publicity. But in the small towns where the riders passed through, they enjoyed a hero's reception. "I've had small kids running up to me for an autograph," marvels Little. "I give them my helmet or gloves or horse to hold, and it's like Wayne Gretzky gave them the hockey stick from his last NHL game. I can see through them the way I thought about the Mounties when I was growing up."

In many ways, in fact, the re-enactment ride is a tonic for a police force that of late has been mired in controversy. Whether it's the ill-fated pursuit of former prime minister Brian Mulroney over the so-called Airbus scandal, pepper-spraying protesters at the 1997 Asia-Pacific Economic Co-operation conference in Vancouver or covertly blowing up an oil company shed in northern Alberta last fall as part of an investigation into alleged eco-terrorist Wiebo Ludwig, the actions of some RCMP members have placed the national police force under harsh scrutiny. But while those controversies are very real, says University of Alberta historian Rod Macleod, so is the pride the nation's police force takes in its role in helping settle the Canadian West. "The arrival of the Mounties in 1874 was a pretty important event, not just for the history of Western Canada, but Canada generally," says Macleod. "There is no question that they made settlement far less bloody than what happened in the American West."

The current horse riders are closely following the 1,300-km route taken by the original Mounties. Starting out from Emerson, Man., on May 8, they have travelled an average of 30 km a day through southern Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta, reaching Fort Macleod, 160 km south of Calgary, on July 3. Starting last week, some participants embarked on a second leg of the journey, from Fort Carlton, Sask., to Edmonton, where they are expected to arrive on July 24. This part of the trek commemorates the original 275-member expedition splitting in two at one point because many of the riders and their horses had been severely weakened due to a lack of water and provisions. About three dozen men and the sickest horses and oxen headed north to Fort Edmonton where shelter and sustenance were available at the Hudson's Bay Co. post. The remainder carried on to their final destination of Fort Whoop-Up, near the current site of Fort Macleod.

The core group of officers involved in the current trek have been joined by hundreds of civilian riders, some travelling just for a few days and others for the entire expedition. In the early going, the weather was atrocious: it rained for 29 of the first 35 days, the same horrific downpours that left flooded farmers in Manitoba and Saskatchewan pleading for emergency financial aid from Ottawa. But the weather brightened considerably as the riders emerged from the flatlands and began to climb through Saskatchewan's Cypress Hills, just east of the Alberta border.

The Cypress Hills—the highest point of land between Labrador and the Rockies—played a central role in bringing the first Mounties west. One of the immediate reasons for dispatching the force was the havoc being wreaked among the Plains Indians by American whisky traders. The area was one of the centres of the whisky trade (Fort Whoop-Up being another). And it was in the Cypress Hills in 1873 that a gang of American and Canadian wolf hunters massacred dozens of Assiniboine Indians—a tragedy that convinced then-Prime Minister John A. Macdonald to step up the timetable for sending in the police to avoid a repeat of the bloody Indian wars on the American Plains.

When a *Maclean's* reporter and photographer met up with the modern-day riders in the Cypress Hills in late June, many of them were glad to be heading into scenic and, for the time being, more temperate climes. As one troop commander put it, the rest of Saskatchewan had been so flat, "you could watch your dog get lost for three days." And as nearly 200 RCMP and civilian riders—all dressed in the traditional red serge of the NWMP—marched in two-by-two procession through





Some of the nearly 200 riders on the trail in the Cypress Hills (above and top); lowering the Union Jack at a camp near Maple Creek, Sask. the Mounties played a critical role in negotiating the first treaties between Canada and the aboriginals, helping to stave off American expansionism

Photography by Todd Korol for Maclean's

the unspoiled hill country towards Fort Walsh, it was easy to be taken back in time. "This must be much as it looked 125 years ago," said local rancher Larry Flaig, as he pulled up the rear driving one of several horse-drawn carts for ride participants who lacked the confidence to sit in the saddle. "Those redcoats sure are a pretty sight."

Aside from the RCMP contingent, the other riders are an eclectic lot, drawn from far afield by a passion for horses, Mounties and adventure. Celina Dunlop, photo editor for the prestigious London-based newsweekly *The Economist*, had been at work last year when she saw a wire photo of a female Mountie with a caption describing the forthcoming march. "I thought, 'Wouldn't that be cool, to be heading off into the sunset with a bunch of Mounties,'" says the 38-year-old Dunlop. She says the trek, which is part of her holidays, has reinforced her high opinion of the police force. "For Canada to get rid of the Mounties would be like us getting rid of the Royal Family," she adds. "I don't think Canadians really understand how powerful a symbol the Mounties are for people abroad."





Arriving at Fort Walsh, Cutting with photo of his father (right); a passion for horses, Mounties and adventure

Jane Magnan is another foreigner participating in the march—and one of the few civilians to do the entire 55-day ride between Emerson and Fort Macleod. Magnan, who lives in Dover, Del., sat in the grass one evening after dinner and recalled a particularly challenging stretch in rain-drenched Manitoba. "All of a sudden, we were in the middle of this black storm," she said. "Lightning, thunder, hail, rain, gusting winds—and eight miles left to camp. I looked at the faces around me and I didn't see discouragement or disgust. Just a determination to get through it." Magnan admires the way the early Mounties forged peaceful relations with most of the Plains Indians. "Unfortunately," she says, "we Americans have a reputation for using force rather than diplomacy."

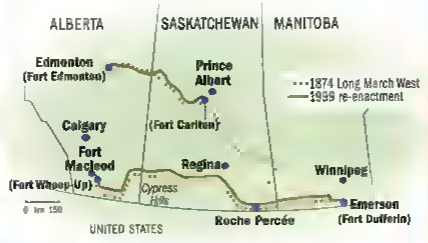
For 84-year-old George Cutting, the trek offered the chance to revisit old stomping grounds. Cutting's father, Percy, first enlisted with the Mounties in 1894 and met members of the 1874 trek west. Cutting, who was born in a cold, drafty house that served as the police detachment at Gull Lake, Sask., joined the Mounties as a trumpeter at age 17. He went on to serve as a riding master at the force's Regina academy before retiring in 1958. Still lean and fit, with a handsome white moustache and a twinkle in his eye, Cutting rode with the march for six days in Saskatchewan. As he relaxed late one afternoon in a bell-shaped canvas tent, Cutting told *Maclean's* he wished he had asked his father more questions about the force's early days. "We didn't always listen as well as we should have," he said. "We could have learned a lot more."

For many participants, the ride was a chance to reflect on what it must have been like for the young men who endured the original trek. The present-day riders enjoy catered meals, and when they pull into camp each afternoon, their tents and the picketing stations for their horses have already been erected by an advance team of army personnel and university students. By contrast, the diaries written by the 1874 marchers reveal men who were often cold and hungry, huddling together on the ground for warmth. They also had no idea of what might lay around the next bend. "I think it would have been terrifying," says Const. Gerald Bomersine, who was the commanding officer for the Saskatchewan portion of the re-enactment ride. "They had to be extremely arrogant or extremely brave. In reality, they were probably a good mixture of both."

They also got the job done. By the time the 1874 riders reached Fort Whoop-Up, the whisky traders had fled back to Montana to avoid confronting the redcoats. The Indians, initially at least, welcomed the police force, which played a critical role in negotiating the first treaties between Canada and the aboriginals, thereby helping to stave off American expansionism. "We wouldn't have Western Canada if it hadn't been for the Mounties," says Const. Susan Downs, one of the few female members of the force taking part in this year's ride. "Probably we'd be part of the United States. We have them to thank for that." For the marchers celebrating that legacy, it is reason enough to ride tall in the saddle. m

By horseback across the Prairies

The riders are closely following the original 1,300-km route



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UBS Bank (Canada) has its antecedents in an investment counselling operation established in 1951 to serve European clients concerned about the future of Europe. Now its emphasis is to expand its Canadian presence to serve Canadian private banking clients. It has been attracting and seeking as client advisers top people with Chartered Financial Analyst and Certified Financial Planner designations who can build client relationships. The bank's objective is to significantly grow in Canada.

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AIR CANADA AEROPLAN

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Word of mouth makes McDermott a star

John McDermott can sing—the 44-year-old is one of Canada's best-selling performers—but he is also one heck of a talker. Almost from the moment he steps onstage at a high-school auditorium in Toronto's west end, the audience is with him. Every quip sends a ripple of laughter across the spacious hall, and even though it's a sunny Sunday afternoon, the place is packed right up to the back rows. The traditional Irish and Scottish ballads that McDermott is known for aren't hip or cool, but that is of no concern to these people. They are here to listen to the songs of their childhood, delivered in McDermott's warm, rich tenor, interspersed with a liberal sprinkling of convivial banter—it's almost as if they were sitting in their living rooms, listening to a favourite son. The adoration appears to be mutual. During intermission he is out in the lobby—as he generally is before and after each show—signing autographs for a long line of well-wishers. "He's a very down-to-earth person," says die-hard fan Marion Richardson. "Personality—that's what it's all about with him."

McDermott, in fact, is something of a phenomenon. Although he only began singing professionally in 1993, he has sold 1.3 million recordings in Canada and the United States. That puts him near the top of the heap for a Canadian artist. Only big pop stars like Celine Dion or Amanda Marshall sell more albums. Astonishingly, it is word of mouth, not airplay or music videos, that has created this massive fan club. He is on the road almost 10 months a year, touring Canada, the United States and Europe, and a year rarely goes by without a clutch of new McDermott projects. In March came *The Irish Tenors*, a TV special and CD recorded live in Dublin with Anthony Kearns and Ronan Tynan that was so successful the trio are kicking off a 12-city North American tour this month. In May, McDermott released *Remembrance* in the United States, a collection of war songs honouring veterans. Mid-July also brings the re-release of *Love Is a Voyage*, a 1995 album that will include five new tracks, most notably *Daughter of Mine*, an original wedding song written by Newfoundland grandmother Madeline Thomson.

All this seems to leave the Glasgow-born, Toronto-raised McDermott somewhat bemused. "I've been so lucky, it isn't funny," he says over chicken-and-rice soup in a distinctly untrendy north Toronto pub. McDermott was raised in the neighbourhood and still lives there, as does his 82-year-old mother and several of his 11 siblings. His father's 1995 wake—a three-day event—was held in the same restaurant and it is clear that McDermott, the world traveller, maintains a profound attachment to his roots. He describes his parents' home on a Saturday night: chairs around the basement walls, lots of friends and neighbours, lots of singing. His father's rich voice led the way and often, as in a McDermott concert, each song was served up with a dash of history. Many people have lost touch with their past, McDermott says, "but there is a silent majority who haven't and that is why I'm successful." That shows in their thirst for the old songs—*Danny Boy*, *Guardian Angel* and *One Small Star* are perennials at his concerts.



Pic et Design, Maclean's

The tenor: a healthy appetite for the old songs

McDermott doesn't seem perturbed by the indifference of Top 40 junkies. He never expected to have a singing career, he says, recounting how a chance meeting with Conrad Black while he was working in the circulation department at *The Toronto Sun* led to Black providing most of the financial backing for his first CD. And McDermott loves performing—"they have to get the hook out or I'd sing all night." He is married and has no children, appearing to spend most waking moments planning more projects. He is giving a series of concerts in the United States to raise money for local veterans' charities and a proposed Second World War memorial in Washington. McDermott also wants to get a fund going to help new performers, something that will allow them to get that crucial first CD made without debt. That idea is still a gleam in his eye, but given McDermott's successes so far, it's one that stands a pretty good chance of coming to pass.

Patricia Chisholm

The timely wisdom of traditional tales



The penetrating beauty and great art of Haida poetry shines through in new translations by West Coast poet and linguist Robert Bringhurst

By John Bemrose

In the fall of 1900, John Swanton, a young American linguist and ethnographer, arrived on British Columbia's Queen Charlotte Islands and found a great culture on the brink of extinction. On the shores of misty inlets, totem poles towered forlornly above abandoned cedar houses. Over the course of the preceding century, the 12,000 Haida people of the archipelago—an area known in their own tongue as Haida Gwaii—had been reduced by the ravages of smallpox to a remnant of about a thousand. Many of the survivors had become Christian and their old beliefs were already slipping from memory. Yet Swanton was able to find a handful of Haida who could still tell their people's traditional oral tales. Many were entertaining and historically important. But the best were poetry of a high order—evocations of the myths that had once sustained the Haida's deep links to the sea and forests.

Swanton, who knew the Haida language, spent a year taking dictation from the surviving storytellers. Ultimately, he published his findings in scholarly books and journals that never reached a wider public. And so—even while Haida carving became celebrated around the world—Haida poetry has remained relatively unknown. But now West Coast poet and linguist Robert Bringhurst has used Swanton's original manuscripts to create one of the most important books to grace Canadian literature in many years. In *A Story as Sharp as a Knife* (Douglas & McIntyre), Bringhurst offers new translations of such penetrating beauty that they fully justify his contention that Haida poetry is, at its best, great art. The book also offers fascinating glimpses into the Haida oral culture, as well as making claims about the authorship of the poems that challenge decades of scholarly thinking.

A slow-spoken man with a deep, pleasant voice, Bringhurst—whose own poetry has been translated into seven languages—is already known for two earlier books about the Haida. In 1984, he and his friend and mentor, Haida sculptor Bill Reid (who died in 1998), published *The Raven Steals the Light*, a superb retelling of Haida stories that has been reprinted several times. Seven years later, Bringhurst and photographer Ulli Steltzer released *The Black Canoe*. It chronicled Reid's sculpting of a six-metre bronze canoe (which now sits outside the Canadian Embassy in Washington), and earned a reputation as one of the best studies ever of Haida culture. Both books were nourished by Bringhurst's study of the Haida language, which he began 17 years ago and which has now achieved its major flowering in *A Story as Sharp as a Knife*. Yet this wise and valuable book, which seems so inevitable a product of his labours, came about, in a sense, by accident.

As Bringhurst tells it, 12 years ago he applied for a Guggenheim Foundation grant to write a book of original poems based on Northwest Coast mythology. He received the $26,000 grant, but when he began to study the best collections of that mythology—books and manuscripts by Swanton and others—he saw he had the wrong idea altogether. "I realized what a fool I had been to suppose that this stuff was folktales just sitting there waiting for some nice, sophisticated downtown poet like me to come along and make art out of it," says Bringhurst. "The art was already there."

And so were the artists. As Bringhurst studied the source material, he discovered that the poems were the work of individual poets with names like Ghandl and Skaay. Bringhurst became convinced that they were great original artists in their own right—a conviction that flies in the face of most scholarly assumptions about Native American literature. In the standard, rather paternalistic view, this work is simply "folk art," created anonymously and passed on substantially unchanged for generations. storytellers were judged not by their originality, but by their faithfulness to the pure, accepted version of a tale.

But Bringhurst's book shows that the Haida poets had their own individual styles. And while they often used similar plots, characters and formulaic phrases, they were no different, he maintains, than those Renaissance artists who all painted crucifixions or annunciations. What counted was not the common subject matter, but the touch of individual genius. "Haida poetry is not folk art any more than the sculpture of Donatello is folk art or the sonatas of Beethoven are folk music," insists Bringhurst. "This is art made by individuals who knew what they were doing, and did it in their own way."

Whatever scholarly turmoil results from his claim, there can be no doubting the strange power of the poems. They are not poetry in the standard European sense, with regular metres and stanzas. Instead, they take a wilder, more freely flowing course, though at the same time they are unified by the subtle, musical repetition of phrases and themes. They are also highly accessible and entertaining, while at a deeper level they come to grips with complex themes of survival and conflict. "This was a literature for the whole community to feast on," Bringhurst says. "There was something in the poems for everybody, but the old, wise people undoubtedly got more out of them than others."

One of Swanton's informants, a blind man called Ghandl, told him a story that Bringhurst entitles "Goose Food." It concerns a young man who marries a young woman who is in fact a wild goose (in so-called mythtime, many creatures could assume human shape). When she flies away to her home in the sky, he follows her, only to discover that he cannot live in her world. This charming story is clearly a version of the folktale known in Europe as "The Swan Maiden"—which inspired Tchaikovsky's ballet, *Swan Lake*. Bringhurst estimates the tale may be 100,000 years old: it may have come to North America from Asia with the ancestors of the Haida.

In Ghandl's telling (or at least in Bringhurst's translation) "Goose Food" has a streamlined, minimalist quality that entices the imagination to flesh it out. Yet the Haida poets could also create passages of great lyrical beauty. Skaay's magnificent tale, "The One They Hand Along," is about a headman's much-loved daughter. It exquisitely evokes her royal origins: "They wove the down of blue falcons into her dancing blanket, they say." The phrase "they say" is common in Haida poetry and seems to emphasize both the elusive, hearsay nature of the tale and—paradoxically—the authority granted to it by common knowledge.

The author, at a deeper level, the highly entertaining poems come to grips with complex themes of survival and conflict

Many of these tales take as their theme the exceeding of wise and sensible limits. In "The One They Hand Along," a young woman is kidnapped by a youth who has stolen his father's magic hat: he takes her off to an alien place under the sea, with unhappy results. Bringhurst believes such stories reflect the Haida's keen sensitivity to the need for social and ecological harmony. In their view, he explains, the cosmos was not run by a single powerful figure "like the Christians' father in the sky." Rather, the universe ran itself through a harmonious distribution of powers among humans, animals and mythological creatures. "No one is in charge of the world, but everyone has some power. If people try to take too much, if they try to take charge, they destroy themselves."

Bringhurst thinks this theme contains a message for the world's current dominant culture, which appears to be committed to unlimited development and consumption. In that sense, *A Story as Sharp as a Knife* may be as timely as it is compelling. Of course, whether the busy world will pay heed to the canny old poets of Haida Gwaii is, as they say, another story. m

How the West was not won

Gizmos and dumb jokes rule a boy's own frolic

Wild Wild West
Directed by Barry Sonnenfeld

Maybe the wrong people are running Hollywood. Given the cartoonish spectacles that dominate movie screens—puerile adventures crammed with battles, explosions and elaborate gizmos—the movie capital could probably do without all those guys in their 40s and 50s. Why not recruit a bunch of 13-year-old boys instead? Think of the savings: no more gargantuan salaries to bankroll the luxury cars and threads. Not that *Wild Wild West* director Barry Sonnenfeld hasn't succeeded in creating a boy's own frolic. Sonnenfeld's last outing with star Will Smith, *Men in Black*, was partly redeemed by touches of adult-friendly, self-mocking wit. This movie, however, made for more than $100 million (U.S.), is virtually uncorrupted by anything vaguely grown-up.

Based on the quirky 1960s TV series of the same name, *Wild Wild West* features Smith as rambunctious, brawn-over-brains James West, a special government agent in 1869 America. President Ulysses S. Grant teams him up with another agent, inventor and master of disguises Artemus Gordon (Kevin Kline), to find out why all the country's top scientists have been kidnapped. The culprit is Dr. Arliss Loveless (Kenneth Branagh), who lost the lower half of his body in the American Civil War—cause for several dumb jokes. We know that Loveless is truly malevolent because his beard has been trimmed into creepy curlicues, and because he has an international posse of barely dressed female helpers who call him "sire."

The real star of this movie, in keeping with the genre, is the special-effects-generated mechanical tarantula that Loveless has created to take over America. The movie plays out as a battle between machines, with fistfights, breast jokes and a silly lust interest (Salma Hayek) thrown in. When West lamely recalls the tragedy that fuels his determination to get Loveless, the cynicism behind the script is apparent, as are the limits of Smith's acting ability. Even 13-year-olds aren't likely to buy it.

Patricia Hluchy



Kline and Smith: the real star is a special-effects-generated mechanical tarantula

Brian D. Johnson is on leave.

An imperfect marriage

An Ideal Husband
Directed by Oliver Parker

It has an A-list cast, including Cate Blanchett and Rupert Everett. The script, inspired by Oscar Wilde's play of the same name, is studded with bracingly clever Wildeisms. Then there are the sumptuous period costumes, as well as the compelling moral quandary at the heart of the story. *An Ideal Husband* promises to be a perfect antidote to the gladiators, space freaks and other oddities on view this summer. But it never quite reaches its potential.

The film pivots on Lord Goring (Everett), who barely redeems his hedonism with sharp wit—he complains he has "distressingly little time for sloth or idleness." But Goring is forced to take life more seriously when scandal threatens his good friend politician Sir Robert Chiltern (Jeremy Northam), testing his seemingly ideal marriage to Lady Chiltern (Blanchett). Everett, Northam and Blanchett are all superb, as is Julianne Moore as Chiltern's nemesis. But Oliver Parker, directing with a pedestrian hand, has failed to give the movie a consistent tone: *An Ideal Husband* is a less-than-perfect marriage of comedy and drama.

P.H.

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Allan Fotheringham

Predictions for the millennium



Roy Peterson

My cruel editors of this here magazine, have recently—without my permission—listed the 25 most significant events in Canadian history this century.

This violates the No. 1 rule of life: never look back, move on. With this in mind, your humble servant offers more useful information. That would be the 25 things that are going to happen in the next 18 months, before the next century begins.

1. The Prime Minister has declared the next Governor General, replacing the suddenly frail Roméo LeBlanc, must be a former politician, because constitutional issues sometimes come into play. The PM's diktat immediately eliminates hopefuls as Adrienne Clarkson and Peter Gzowski. Since LeBlanc is an Acadian francophone, it is the turn for an anglophone. The Forces of Political Correctness feel, after Jeanne Sauvé, it is time again for someone of the female persuasion. The next Governor General will be Iona Campagnolo.

2. Svend Robinson will be in a page 1 headline.

3. Ken Dryden, the only intellectual who somehow has stumbled into hockey, will continue to be hated by Toronto sportswriters because he talks in elliptical sentences that are hard to translate into sound bites.

4. Toronto Mayor Mel Lastman will have a nervous breakdown and retreat to North York where he belongs.

5. The Vancouver Canucks, fuelled by the marvellous Swedish identical twins they scooped in the NHL draft, will make the Stanley Cup finals.

6. The CBC, because Peter Mansbridge cannot stand a strong and brighter female rival, will continue its path of driving Pamela Wallin, the pride of Wadena, Sask., into the grateful arms of Ivan Fecan at CTV, where she will do the documentaries and specials at which she is special.

7. Jean Chrétien resigning, his successor will be Paul Martin.

8. Svend Robinson will make page 1.

9. The CBC, because Michael Enright cannot stand a strong and bright female rival, will drive Avril Benoit into stardom in private radio.

10. The shallow George W. Bush, known as Shrub, will be revealed as having no ideas at all.

11. The NDP in Victoria, knowing it has no hope, will dump Glen Clark.

12. Jean Chrétien resigning, replaced by Brian Tobin.

13. The robotic A. Gore will be beaten for the Democratic nomination by Bill Bradley.

14. The United Alternative having flamed, Alberta Treasurer Stockwell Day will replace Parson Manning as the head of Reform. People will say: Joe Who?

15. Konrad Blast, boy tycoon, will eventually make it to the House of Lords. People in Moose Jaw will say: Konrad who?

16. Jean Chrétien will resign and be replaced by Frank McKenna.

17. The shallow George W. Bush will win the Republican nomination.

18. The CTV search for a replacement for Lloyd Robertson will centre not on Tom Clark, but CBC's handsome Vancouver band Ian Hanomansing. But his availability rests mainly on his very smart lawyer wife and her very handsome legal practice on the Wet Coast.

19. Re Y2K, there are three places one should not be at midnight on Dec. 31: an airplane, a hospital, an elevator. Safest place to be is Antarctica, holding hands with a penguin.

20. Boomer Wells, the jerk who pitches for the Toronto Blue Jays and, after signing for a $16-million contract extension and boasts in *Playboy* he has three children and has never been married, has decided he will not talk to the Toronto press for some perceived "slight," will talk to the press after he has a talk with a public relations firm.

21. The spinmeisters who run the Liberal party will attempt to recruit astronette Julie Payette as Jean Chrétien's replacement. She would sweep the country, since she can actually speak both languages.

22. Hillary Clinton will eventually win the battle against the loathsome Manhattan Mayor Rudy Giuliani to become the New York junior senator and people will say: Bill Who?

23. The extremely dull Bill Bradley will win the American presidency over the extremely shallow George W. Bush.

24. Konrad Blast's *National Post* will continue its incessant (and honourable) investigation into how much Liberal pork has gone into the riding of the Prime Minister who has, inadvertently, delayed the boy tycoon's entry into the House of Lords of a foreign country.

25. Jean Chrétien will not resign.



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